# BEING

AND

# ATTRIBUTES of GOD

DEMONSTRATED,

In a Method intirely new, yet easy to be understood by even the Unlearned:

OR, AN

# ESSAY concerning GOD,

### In Four Parts:

I. An Explication of the Argument a priori, or from the Nature of God.

II. This Argument exhibited in a Series of Propositions.

III. The most material Objections.

tions against Gon's moral Character answered.

IV. A proper Temper and Conduct towards Go D adjusted, in several important Corollaries.

The whole adapted to the Use of the active World.

# By HENRY KNIGHT, A. M. at Chertsey in Surrey.

Ταυτα χεη και περι Θα Διανομώται, Δυναμει μεν ουτος ιοχυροτατε, Καλλει Ν΄ ευπρεπες απε, Ζοι Ν΄ς αθαναπε, Αρετη κρατισε.

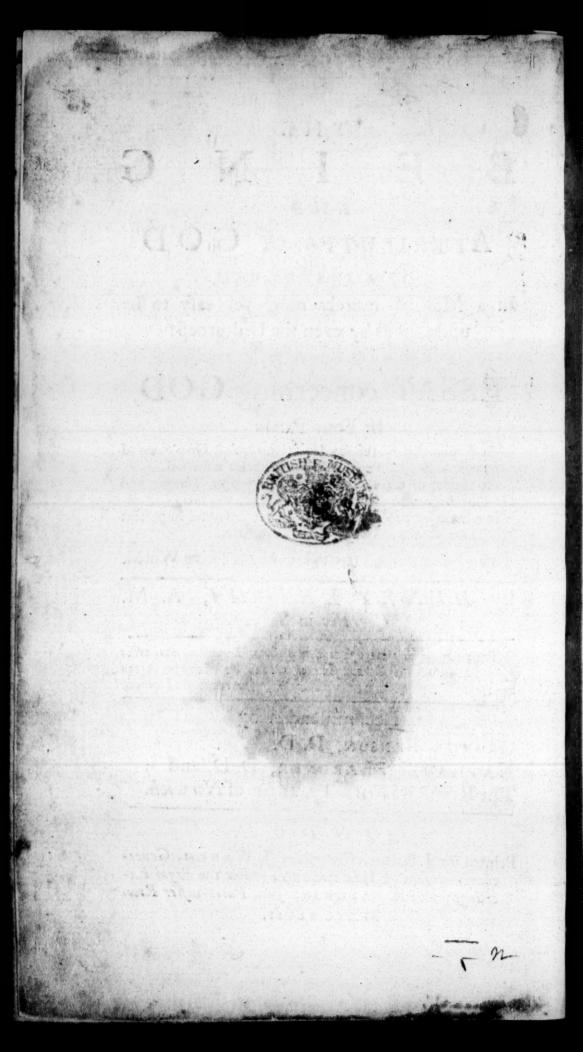
Ariftot. de Mundo.

# Recommended by

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NATHANIEL LARDNER, D. D. and
The Revd Mr. John Taylor of Norwick.

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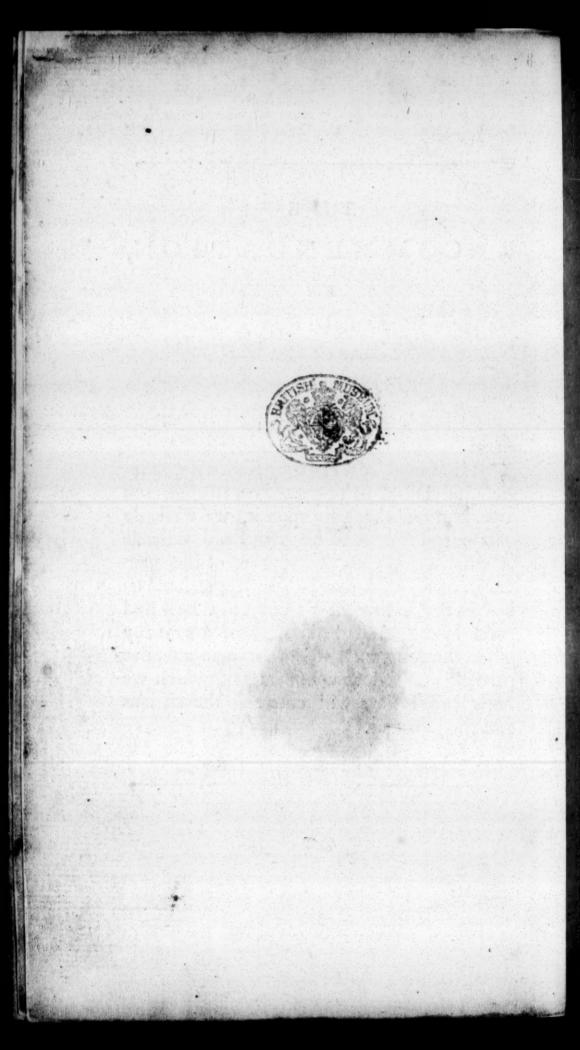
# RECOMMENDATION,

BY

GEORGE BENSON, D. D.
NATHANIEL LARDNER, D.D. and
The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. John Taylor of Norwich,

### Is as follows:

OUR friend, Mr. HENRY KNIGHT, having defired us to peruse his treatise, and give him our thoughts upon it, we willingly bear our testimony to his useful and valuable labours, and declare we approve of the main design of his book; and that we apprehend he has set the argument a priori, in a new and good light. And besides, there are many other things, which well deserve an attentive perusal, and serious consideration, which we hope and believe will entertain the curious and the judicious.



### THE

# PREFACE,

TOTHE

Active part of mankind in particular.

cidal nod

COME will, it may be prefum'd, be curious to know the reasons of publishing this book, after fo much has been wrote, by the most learned antient and modern authors, upon the subject: those are chiefly two, viz. the great importance of the argument a priori in theology, and wrong apprehenfions in many concerning the nature and moment of it, as if it were no more at best than a metaphyfical whim, fit only for amufing fome follower, or fond admirer of the old schoolmen. Indeed, it must be own'd, it has generally been render'd too intricate for common capacities, by technical terms, and scholastic subtilties: but for all that, it is a real and very useful argument, affording clear and just conceptions of the being and attri-2 3

butes of God. And I am fure it concerns you men of business, as well as men of learning, to perceive the evidence attending this subject, and to believe in God on the most rational grounds. Here the foundation of all real religion lies, and here is the beginning of all acceptable devotion and piety: to lay this ground-work firm, in only clear evidence, rational conviction, and a folid stable belief, is certainly the best method we can take against those two pernicious extremes, atheism and superstition. For it is owing to some great defect here, that there is so much wrong practice in fome, and wrong judging in others. Therefore, that even those who are not in the rank of scholars, might see with their own eyes, and perceive and believe with their own understandings, I have endeavour'd to adapt the following pages to common fense, and with great fincerity offer them to your fervice, hoping as well as wishing, that they may be of confiderable fervice to you, especially if Ælian's (a) observation long ago hold good, that moral and theological truths usually make a deeper impression upon perfons in your station of life, than on others. As to persons of a liberal education, it is undeniable.

<sup>(</sup>a) No Indian, Celt or Egyptian ever fancied as Euemerus the Messenian, Dionysius the Phrygian, Hippo, Diagoras, and Sosias did, that there was neither God nor providence. Ælian. Var. Hist. Lib. 2. C. 31.

deniable, many of them are immerst in low pleasures, or trisle away life in a kind of genteel incogitancy, well content with current doctrines without examining whether they are true or false: and many think, read and write indeed, but it is only how they may defend and maintain particular local religious opinions and modes; therefore if they happen to be in the right, it is well; and if not, the more they study, the further they run from truth and mislead others.

You cannot then but be fenfible, that you are to think and judge for yourselves; for as you know you cannot possibly see with any eyes but your own, you perceive too that you cannot apprehend and judge with any rational faculties but your own. You may indeed, and you ought to make use of all affistance to find out truth, theological or divine truth: but after all, you must with your own thinking faculties apprehend, judge, and believe for yourselves. Please to accept and use the affistance here offer'd you, that you may improve in the knowledge of God: do your part, in reading with attention, and striving to understand for yourselves: without this the best helps and the clearest arguments, like the most beautiful colours in the dark, are loft and vanish into nothing: even both the brightest evidence and the greatest importance of subjects make not the least impression upon a thoughtless and trifling mind: strict and plain demonstration itself is thrown away. upon inattention, and the utmost moment of things is ineffectual. Wherefore give me leave to intreat you, to read an argument from end to end at once; then pause, and take a review; for if you shou'd not see the strength of it at first, going over it again may afford you the pleasure you want, which is feeing for yourselves. You know who bids us feek moral truth as filver, and fearch for. her as for hid treasures; and gives us his word, that we should succeed in our careful refearches. A fauntering method of reading will not do for you or me, as it will prevent both your pains and mine answering any valuable end.

And that I may engage your careful attention, let me tell you, you have now a subject before you not fit only for beguiling a tedious or idle hour now and then: Nor a subject of a mere critical kind, as the omission or addition of a letter in some piece of antiquity, or the shape and size of some antique vestment: nor a political or eutopian institution: nor a piece of ill-natur'd controversial divinity: once more, it is no philosophical nor theological hypothesis: none of these is now presented to you. No, the subject you are invited attentively to consider, is certain in itself, and of the last importance to us all;

if any subject can deserve and claim your best attention, it must be this; if any will reform your moral tempers, this will; if certainty and evidence accompany any argument, they attend this, to command your affent, and afford your minds affurance: if any fubject, in a word, can yield both profit and pleasure, this does. The conclusion then must be obvious and undeniable, that our most enlarged knowledge of it is necesfary, and the firmest belief of it, of the greatest importance: above all, a calm attention to the subject shou'd terminate in all divine tempers and behaviour, on our part, towards the great and perfect parent of the universe; and this part of the argument is not neglected. It might be hinted too, to engage the attention of your minds in confidering the subject before you, that you will find it handled in a method intirely new, and feveral thoughts too which may not have occurr'd to you, either in your own meditations, or in the course of your reading; however, some few which I have not met with in any books which have fallen into my hands either antient or modern. It may also be agreeable to you, to be affured that the following pages have been perus'd carefully, examin'd and criticiz'd on impartially, and approved by feveral learned and ingenious gentlemen besides those who have honour'd me with

with a publick recommendation; to all of whom, I own myself under many obliga-

tions, and especially to Mr. Taylor.

As to the performance itself; the form of the first and third part, you will find, to be that of dialogue, it being the most suitable to my design: the stile is plain, but perhaps not negligent, technical and hard terms being as carefully avoided as was possible. Now and then indeed there is a quotation from some author of antiquity, but it is generally turned into English for the use of such as are not scholars (b). It is hoped, the reasoning generally is clear and conclusive, and that it may be apprehended by all who will allow themselves to attend in earnest to it, sometimes

<sup>(</sup>b) Shou'd any think the quotations from and references to antient authors in particular which he may meet with, look unpolite and oftentatious, it wou'd give me no concern in the least, fince the modern manner seems culpable as well as that which prevailed so much in the last century: some can scarce endure an author of antiquity shou'd now be so much as named, much less quoted in his own words, and cannot forbear giving him hard names who ventures to do it: but all readers are not of this very nice particular tafte, and they who are, may indulge themselves as much as they please. Certain it is, there is a medium betwixt the two extremes, that of late centuries and the present one: and it is certain, the antient authors which are quoted in the following pages, are in general equal, if not much superior to the moderns, in fentiments and language; and therefore an averfion to them by no means discovers a good taste and a good judgment. Once more, let it be observed, that some of the best authors amongst the moderns more frequently perhaps quote the antients than I do.

times it is fet in one point of view, sometimes in another.

Upon the whole, I flatter myself, the perusal of it will be worth your pains, if read with attention and candour; for formally to disparage it, wou'd be ridiculous, as my own commendations of it wou'd be insidious.

Your bumble Servant,

H.K.



5 JY61

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# ERRATA.

Page	Line	For	Read.
32. (9)	ult.	censuere,	confuere
33. (r)	5.	titaniaque:	titaniaque
Ibid.	7.	Meus	Mens
51.	10.	Immpofibility	Impossibility
52. (c)	12.	Ligneas.	Ligneas
Ibid.	13.	Eburneas	Eburneas;
63. (i)	5.	TPIGIEV MANA	TPIGEN .
74.	6.	país,	pass:
85.	25.	own;	own,
149. (*)	4.		cras
Ibid.	5.	ex fistentia	exfistentia
204.	22.	For	Far
212.	7	those: further	those. Further
263.	5.	amongst,	amongst us,
272.	19.	Athift	Atheist
287.	16.	others strange	others to have strange
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316.	8.	and	or another
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329. (0)	ult.	Mrs.	Mr.

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is hope to Callana, and to be



The ARGUMENT a Priori
for the Being and Attributes
of GOD, render'd more plain for
the active part of mankind in particular.

The FIRST PART: being an Explication of the Argument.

### SECTION I.

An INTRODUCTION to the Ex-

# EUSEBIUS and THEOPHILUS:

THEOPHILUS generally argues, folves any difficulty, &c. And EUSEBIUS's part is to learn, to object, to query, &c.

philus, to see you, at this time especially, since my thoughts have just now been engaged closely upon the sublimest point of speculation, the Existence and Perfections of God; a subject you B

love to discourse upon; and therefore you are

come feafonably to my Affistance.

THEOPH. It is indeed not only the most fublime, but the most amiable object of thought; and therefore what above all others I endeavour to understand myself, and ardently with were better understood by all men. For tho' there is nothing they are fo much concerned to know, and nothing whereof they may have clearer and more certain ideas; yet there is nothing, about which they are more vain in their imaginations, and more inconfistent in their Sentiments than about the Being and Nature of God: one fect, the philosophical and religious, giving one description of him; and, another a very different one; and yet no wonder, all things confider'd, for concerning that bright and glorious Luminary the Sun there are different Opinions, not only amongst the vulgar, but amongst the learned. But if you chuse to enter into the argument, I am at leisure, and very ready to give you the best help I can.

do me, as the Being and Nature of God is the foundation of all Religion, and as it is absolutely necessary to the right direction, the settled peace and comfort of my mind, to have just and well-establish'd notions of the Deity. Therefore, without any further preamble, pray give me a general idea of that Being we

call God.

THEOPH. God is an uncaused, eternal, infinite, and an all-perfect Spirit; the parent of the universe, the sountain of all happiness; power without weakness, knowledge without ignorance, wisdom without folly, truth without falshood, goodness without malice, righteousness without iniquity; in short, excellence without the least blemish or defect, invariably existing from eternity to eternity, and from infinity to infinity. This is the true idea of God (a).

B 2 EUSEB.

(a) This most amiable idea of God, or in the Platonic stile, πολυ πελαγος τε καλε, the vaft ocean of beauty and goodness, has been contemplated with the greatest pleasure, not only by weak, but well-disposed minds, but by the greatest genius's the world ever afforded, as the honourable Mr. Robert Boyle, Mr. Locke, Mr. Addison, and Sir Ijaac Newton; to say nothing here of the great and learned Theists among the antients. Our modern Scepticks and Infidels are great pretenders, it is well known, to reason and philosophy, and will scarce allow any but themselves to have any tolerable share of either: but these lay gentlemen are a most effectual confutation of fuch pretences. Mr. Boyle, it is certain, made it his grand defign in his enquiries into nature, to raise in himself and others the highest thoughts of God, of his greatness and goodness, his wisdom and glory. The article in his will relating to the Royal Society concludes with wishing them " a happy Success in their laudable attempts to discover the " true nature of the works of God; and praying that they " and all other fearchers into phyfical truths, may cordially " refer their attainments to the glory of God, the great and "thor of nature, and to the comfort of mankind." He had the profoundest veneration for this great Being, such, that he never mention'd the very name of God in convertation, without a folemn pause in his discourse. Against Atheists he wrote his free enquiry into the received notion of nature, and his Essay upon the final causes of things natural: against Deafts he wrote his treatife of things above reason. This gentleEUSEB. And a glorious, charming idea it is, which must appear delightful to every mind, not perverted by error, not clouded with superstition, and not stupissed with sensuality: To every mind well disposed, such a Being is more agreeable than the light of the sun to a sound and strong eye; and sooner would such an one wish that glorious luminary extinguish'd, or turn'd into an opake cinder,

man was the greatest philosopher in the experimental part, that perhaps was ever known. Mr. Locke is univerfally allow'd to be the finest Reasoner of his age, or any other: And there is no doubt, but he was a very good Christian; his life and writings are an undeniable proof of it. In a letter to Mr. Collings, who afterwards, some way or other, fell into a very different way of thinking and writing from Mr. Locke's, directed to be deliver'd to him after Mr. Locke's death, there are these remarkable words. " This life is a scene of vanity "that foon passes away, and affords no folid fatisfaction but " in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of an-" other life. This is what I can fay upon experience, and " what you will find to be true, when you come to make up " the account." Mr. Addison's character none in these and the neighbouring nations are strangers to, who have any taste for the politest compositions: which prove him to be both a good patriot, and a gentleman of great virtue and religion. And Sir Isaac Newton, rather one of a higher species than our's, as Mr. Addison observes, apply'd his wonderful discoveries concerning the fystem of the universe, as Mr. Boyle had his enquiries into nature, to the demonstration of the being, wifdom, and power of God, against atheists of all kinds. At the end of his mathematical principles of philosophy, he gives us his thoughts concerning the Deity: he first observes, that the similitude found in all parts of the universe makes it undoubted, that the whole was made and is govern'd by one Supreme Being of all perfection: And then proceeds briefly to flate the best metaphysical notions, concerning God. What a despicable figure do all atheistical writers make in the learned world, with all their mighty pretences to reason, philosophy, and learning, in comparison with these truly great scholars, philosophers, and religious gentlemen!

cinder, and our system all involved in the horrid gloom of thick darkness, than that a being so amiable and glorious should not exist. Some indeed, I know, ascribe the origin and direction of all things to chance: others to sate and destiny: but in chance or sate, those chimerical beings, there is no understanding, power or goodness, and really no persection at all; and therefore these persons must reduce all things to the utmost uncertainty and confusion, and quite bereave us of all hope and comfort. And I cannot but wonder, that any philosopher should have a heart to advance and argue for such wretched and melancholy schemes.

Let us review the definition: God is an uncaused, eternal, all-perfect being, &c. Yes, this is the being compleatly qualified to be the parent of the universe, whose existence can be disagreeable only to those, who are enemies to knowledge, wisdom, truth, goodness, and righteousness; that is, it can be disagreeable only to diabolical minds. Were the monarchy of the universe elective; all right reason would most chearfully vote the sovereignty to God, and to him alone for ever.

THEOPH. Atheists indeed set our affairs in a most wretched situation; and yet, which is very odd, they pretend to relieve our minds from the terrors attending the belief of a Deity: they represent the idea of God as a most frightful bugbear, and tell us, it is the B 2

refult of superstious fears: but this is a gross error; for the idea of God is founded in calm confideration, and is fo far from being a horrid terrifying one, that of all possible ideas it is the most amiable, and must be so, unless where gross darkness, astonishing delusion, wretched folly and vice, reign uncontroul'd: there indeed this most pleasing idea must be hateful, as light itself must be offensive to a distemper'd eye, or agreeable food to a vitiated tafte and stomach. To one in this unhappy condition, God must appear as only a most dreadful enemy, tho' he is posses'd of all possible perfection. True, the Atheist has nothing to fear from his unintelligent atoms and his unconscious nature; but then he has nothing to hope from either of them. The advocate for chance must live under the most discouraging uncertainty, and the fatalist can find no place for virtue and happiness, its attendant, in fate and necessity. But the Theift, who thinks and acts aright in religion, has nothing in the least to fear from the Deity, but on the contrary may juftly hope for every real good. There is not the least doubt of the preferrableness of true theology to every atheistic scheme, antient or modern, as Epicurus himself owns (b); nor of the condition of the virtuous Theist, whether prefent or future, to that of any Atheist: no more doubt.

<sup>(</sup>b) Κρειττου ηυ τω περι Θεων μυθω κατακολεθείν, &c. In Epilt. ad Men. apud Gass. p. 49.

doubt, I say, than there is which is bigger, a mole-hill or a mountain; or which is better,

pain or pleasure.

EUSEB. Very true; and therefore it is probable, that the invention and propagation of fuch wild, (c) disconsolate schemes, must be owing to the blending of false and horrid doctrines with true theology. Even now, amidst the united glorious light of nature and revelation, such shocking things are said of God, and fuch fad representations of him laid both before the learned and vulgar in fome philosophical and theological systems too, that it is much more defirable there should be no God, than one of fuch a character, as no name is much to be preferred to a bad one. But, Theophilus, shew me that the most agreeable idea of God, which you have fet before me, is real and true, and not imaginary.

THEOPH. Surely you would not question this, were you a little better acquainted with several very (d) excellent performances upon.

B 4 this

(a) The fad condition of fome superstitious people is well presented by Plutarch, thus: slaves, when asleep, forget

(d) Not to mention feveral among the antients, both Greek and Latin, who have wrote upon this great subject; there are several modern authors, viz. T. Aquinas contra Gentiles,

Marinus

represented by Plutarch, thus: slaves, when asleep, forget, the threats of their masters, and prisoners their shackles: diseases, wounds, and cancers are eas'd by this remedy, sleep: but to these wretched creatures, the superactious, this sovereign remedy of nature is but of small service, procuring them very little freedom from their horrible sears of the Gods; but as if they inhabited the regions of impiety, they are haunted with terrible visions and apparitions continually. Plut. de Superstit.

this subject: but now I remember you lately complain'd in some conversation of the obscurity of the argument a priori, and of the books which had been wrote upon it; and ask'd me if this argument could not be made plainer, even plain enough for common capacities. I was then, and still am of opinion, it may be made much plainer, without being injur'd at all.

EUSEB. Pray try then, if you can make

it plain and eafy.

THEOPH. With all my heart; to begin then, what do you think of yourself, are you

a real or an imaginary being?

EUSEB. That's an odd question indeed; as if any one could doubt of the reality of his own being.

THEOPH.

Marinus Mercennus in Gen. Campanelle Atheismus Triumph. Raymundus de Sabunde, in Theologia Naturali, Bradwardine de Causa Dei, Spizelius, Voets, Mr. Jaquelot, Mr. Poiret, Valessus de Sacr. Philosoph. Augustus Eugubinus de perenni Philosoph. Ludovic. Vives de veritate Fid. Christian. Philip. Marnæus, Zanchius de Oper. Dei et alib. Archbishop of Cambray, Bishop Fotherby, Dr. H. More, Bishop Seth Ward, S. Colliber, Mr. Howe, Bishop Wilkins, and many others; besides, there are several anonymous authors: but there is one who must not be pass'd over in silence, as amongst obscure authors, because his demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God is perhaps a performance superior alone to all others whatever, whether antient or modern taken together: I need not fay this most excellent author is the late Dr. S. Clarke, of whom nothing greater can be faid, than that he is worthy of that inimitably glorious character given of him by Bishop Headley.

THEOPH. And if he should doubt, his very doubting would (e) prove it; for if he were not, he could not doubt. Do you find any difficulty in admitting there are other beings besides yourself?

EUSEB. None at all. If I am a real substance, surely I can have no difficulty in admitting there are other substances as well as myself; for my being proves, that existence not only is possible, but actual; and I can give no reason why there should be no other real being besides myself. How can I doubt of existence? You cannot possibly make me doubt of it; for should you attempt to demonstrate, that you are nothing, it would be attempting to demonstrate that there can be

(e) The antient Scepticks or Pyrrhonists pretended to doubt of every thing whatever; but most awkardly supported their pretence, by attempting to demonstrate that no demonstration could be given. An extraordinary attempt! However, they appear'd to be as sceptical as almost was possible; for they could not agree whether they should be call'd Pyrrhonists or no, because allowing they knew Pyrrbo's sentiments, was granting they knew something, which was contrary to their grand principle, that they knew nothing. But none of Pyrsho's followers came up to his own pitch of doubting; for having denied all distinctions between right and wrong, true and false, he try'd to behave conformably to his Sceptick, system; he would avoid no danger, not even stir out of his way, tho' a chariot or waggon was about to run over him; nor would he go about to avoid falling from a precipice, or beat off a dog running at him: fo that his friends were obliged to attend him, to keep the Sceptick out of harm's way. Once particularly nature was too ftrong for his philosophy, in turning him out of the way of a dog that would have torn him in pieces; but he was asham'd, repented, and made a scrupulous apology for his mistake. Diog. Laert. Pyrth. Vit.

no demonstration; the very attempt would demonstrate, that you are a real being; for nothing can demonstrate nothing. Nor can I doubt of the existence of those objects without me, which I daily see, hear, and seel: the ideas of them I receive as necessarily as that of my own being, and they have no dependence at all upon my imagination; I could often wish they had; therefore as I am certain of my own existence, I am so of theirs too.

THEOPH. Very well. Here then lies the ground-work of the argument we are entring upon: fomething now exists, or has a real being; therefore something has always existed, or had a real being. This is the only method in which we can prove the existence of the first cause, by beginning a posteriori (f); for the argument a priori does not, nor indeed can prove, that there is a first cause, but supposes it already prov'd.

EUSEB. But hold, Sir, I must ask leave to interrupt you. I do not understand a priori and a posteriori. Pray explain yourself.

THEOPH. Arguing a posteriori is arguing from effects to causes. We find such and such

volumus procedere, ad deorum naturam perveniamus, necesse est. If we first begin with the imperfect works of nature, and gradually ascend to the more perfect, we must unavoidably at last come to the knowledge of God, the great author of all; as if we trace back the stream, it will lead us up to the sountain. Cicer, de Nat. Deor. 1. 2. p. 205.

fuch effects produc'd; and therefore we conclude, both that there must be a cause, and that it must be of such a particular nature and kind. And arguing a priori is arguing from what we have already discover'd in the nature of the cause; and concluding from thence, that it must be so and so in other respects. For instance, when we understand that God is uncaused and self-existent, we argue then from the nature of felfexistence, and thence prove that he is eternal, infinite, &c. But, that I may explain myself a little more clearly, suppose some angelic being, who had never been on our earth, and before he had feen any of the inhabitants of it, should meet with a well-built edifice; and, upon taking a view of the structure, its contrivance, proportions, and adjustment of the parts, together with its furniture, should conclude it to be the workmanship of some creature endow'd with reason: thus he would argue backwards a posteriori, from the effect to the cause, from that which comes after to that which goes before it, and produced it. Now having demonstrated to himfelf, that the builder of the fabrick is a rational Being, he has got a new principle of argument, and consequently may turn his thoughts the other way; and arguing from the powers and properties of reason, or from the rational nature of the architect, may conclude that the same power of reason is capable of producing

producing feveral other effects as well as a house, viz. a ship, a bridge, variety of machines, as a mill, a clock, &c. From this fame power of reason too, he discovers the architect is a moral agent, able to diftinguish betwixt truth and falshood, right and wrong, good and evil, and is obliged to chuse the one, and refuse the other. Still further, from this very power of reason he concludes the architect is a focial being, delighting in communicating his fentiments, and receiving intelligence from others, and in exchanging mutual good offices. Thus he would argue a priori, or from that which is first, or prior to the effect, taking his argument from what he knows of the nature of such a being: whereas, before he argued from the effect, which is after or posterior to the cause, and so discover'd fomething in the nature of the cause, or the builder of the house.

EUSEB. I apprehend your meaning: in the first way, or a posteriori (g), he ascends from the bottom to the top of the hill; in the other way, viz. a priori, he stands upon the summit,

<sup>(</sup>g) It is no matter which way we find out truth, whether in the synthetic or analytic, provided we do but come at it. Mathematicians in algebra begin at the end, and argue backward; and having found out the truth thus, they make it a standing theorem, from which they may ever afterwards argue a priori. Thus we proceed, for having found there must be an eternal uncaused being, by the analytic method, or arguing from effects, we make this truth a standing theorem, and deduce all the same consequences from it, as if we had seen it directly without an analysis or investigation. See Enq. into the Nat. of the human Soul, note in p. 345.

fummit, and thence takes a view of all around him: In the former way, he ascends from the known effect to the unfeen, unknown cause; in the latter way, having discover'd fomething in the nature of the cause, or builder of the house, he argues from thence, and finds it capable of producing many other effects, and that it must be endow'd with feveral powers or qualities, refulting from the rational nature: from this nature he might expect to meet with a variety of works and machines in our world, several instances of virtue, and possibly some of vice, societies erected, laws enacted, religion practifed, &c. All these things justly might he expect to find amongst us in our world, before he had feen one person upon the globe. For the general nature of reason enlarges the prospect, and would flow the angelic being, that all these things might possibly have a place amongst us. This I understand: but why should we not rather say, the argument from the effect, and the argument from the nature of the cause, than a priori and a posteriori?

THEOPH. As we now understand these phrases, and therefore no perplexity can arise from the use of them, it may not be amiss to retain them. But to proceed, as I was faying, the Being of God, or a first cause, cannot possibly be proved a priori; existence cannot be proved a priori, because no argument can be drawn from the nature of existence, without supposing existence; consequently existence must must be supposed prior to the argument a priori, or before we can argue from the nature of existence: we must first suppose something exists, and from the existence thereof must argue, that something has always existed: As for the argument a priori, it is properly and truly a demonstration, not of the Being, but of the Perfections of God, and indeed is the only demonstrative proof thereof. As I shall have occasion to make use of both these arguments, 'tis sit you should understand well the nature and force of both, and see how they mutually affist each other.

I must also put you in mind, that it is the existence of a first cause, and such attributes and properties of his nature as we are acquainted with, and not the effence or fubstance thereof, which I undertake to prove and explain. The effence or substance of all things, as well as of the first cause, lies out of the reach of our understandings; we can only know, and it is enough for us to know, the properties or qualities belonging to any fubstance, of whose existence we may be sure, tho' we cannot understand what that is. What the substance of Gold is, I cannot possibly explain; but 'tis fufficient, that I know the substance, whatever that be, is endow'd with fuch and fuch particular qualities. In like manner, if I can demonstrate, that the first cause exists, and that he is a being or substance endu'd with all the properties that we

can discover in his nature, it is all you can in reason expect from me, and abundantly sufficient to surnish you with just sentiments. And this I presume may be done, by the joint assistance of these two arguments before-mention'd, a priori and a posteriori; but especially by the former, when it is not involv'd in hard words and uncouth sounds, but manag'd with judgment and integrity: this, 'tis hoped, will make it appear a plain, real, and demonstrative argument, instead of its being either a metaphysical whim, or at best but an abstruse speculation, and a privileg'd topick for obscurity and unintelligibleness.

These things premised, I now endeavour to prove briefly the existence of a first cause.



# SECT. II.

# A First Cause demonstrated a poste-

Something now exists, or has a real being. Of this your own existence is an infallible proof; and no other or better is necessary. And if something now exists (b), then it is certain something has always existed: the former proposition is not more clear and undeniable than the latter consequent from it. For had there been a time in which there was no being, no being could possibly exist at this

(b) Effects we acknowledge naturally do include a power of producing them before they were produced; and that power presupposeth something existent that hath such power: And the thing so existing with power to produce, if it were not eternal, must needs have been produc'd by somewhat before it, and that again by something else before that, till we come to an eternal (that is to say, the first) power of all powers, and first cause of all causes: And this is it which all men conceive by the name of GOD, implying eternity, incomprehensibility, and composence. And thus all that will consider, may know that God is, even a man that is born blind, tho it be not possible for him to imagine what fire is, yet cannot but know somewhat there is men call so, because it warmeth him. Hobbs's Hum. Nat. p. 69, 70.

Let the reader take the more notice of this passage of Mi Hobbs, because he was at least generally esteem'd an Atheist.

or any other time; for nothing cannot give existence to any being at any time whatever. Therefore you must believe there always has existed an uncaused, independing being; or else you must suppose that there always has been a succession of beings, depending upon, and producing one another, without any cause producing them: but this is a plain contradiction, as it is supposing an endless succession of effects, without any cause, or a series of productions without any producer. Do

you see the truth of this reasoning?

EUSEB. Let me consider. Yes, I think, I do; nay, I am fure I do. As there is fomething now in being, had there ever been a time when there was nothing, then something must have made itself, at the same time that it was nothing, or before it existed; or fomething must have been made by nothing; which is a manifest contradiction, and not to be removed by faying, that one caused being produced another, and so on; for still, unless we suppose a first uncaused being, it will be true, that the first being produced itself when it was nothing, or before it had any existence. Nothing is clearer, methinks, nor more unquestionable, than, of nothing there can proceed nothing. Do not I apprehend you, and understand your first principle?

THEOPH. You take me right: no being can be cause and effect. Thus the things which now exist infallibly conduct us back to

a first, i.e. an uncaused cause or being. So that we are as sure, that there is such a being, as we are of even our own existence, or that of any other beings. And here we have no adversaries, the whole tribe of Atheists (i) being compell'd to own some first uncaused being or beings, as the atoms of Epicurus and Lucretius, which they supposed to be eternal, tho' jumbled into order some thousands of

years ago, they know not how.

Now having by strict demonstration found a first, unoriginate, underived, uncaused being, we are got to the utmost length that this argument a posteriori can carry us, in this part of the subject. Hence therefore the argument a priori must start, and derive its conclusions as from a fountain; just as the angelic being mention'd before, derived, as we supposed, his conclusions relating to the unknown inhabitants of this globe from reason, as the principle prov'd a posteriori; or, to use your own comparison, now we are got upon an eminence, whence we may take a view of the vast, extended, and awful prospect all around us.

EUSEB. Such a view will give me great pleasure, if you are but as clear in all your reasonings, as in the arguments already advanced.

# THEOPH. I will do my best .-

SECT.

<sup>(</sup>i) Marcennus reckon'd there were, in his time, 50,000 Atheists in Paris itself.

# SECT. III.

The Independency of God prov'd a priori.

THEOPH. WHEN you reflect upon the nature of a first, or an uncaused, underived being, what is the first thing that occurs to your thoughts concerning its existence?

EUSEB. Let me confider.—Why, methinks it is this property, that it owes its existence to no other being.

THEOPH. What, not to himself?

EUSEB. No, not even to himself; for your preceding argument proves thus much concerning all beings universally, that not any one whatever can possibly be the cause of its own existence; for then it would be at the same time both cause and effect, or nothing would produce something, or the same thing would exist and not exist at one and the same time, which is impossible, and a direct contradiction in terms.

THEOPH. Very true. Then it follows immediately and infallibly from the nature of an uncaused, underived being, that it depends not upon itself, nor upon any other thing or being whatsoever for existence, but must be absolutely and entirely independent: that is to say, there is no possible cause, no Power nor Will whatsoever, that either gave or continues its existence, or that can any way affect it. Is this clear?

EUSEB. Yes furely; for what cause, what power or will, can any ways contribute to, or affect the existence of that being which is uncaused, underived, and which exists exclusively of the influence of any cause whatever?



# SECT. IV.

The Necessity of God's Existence prov'd a priori.

THEOPH. WELL then, let's go on. Seeing the uncaused being depends upon no cause whatever for its existence, neither upon itself, for it could not cause itself, nor upon any other being: it follows, that a necessity of existence in the nature of this being is the only ground or reason of his existing, it being a contradiction that his existence should be accounted for by any thing else, or in any other way. Do you see this?

Euseb. Not immediately; wherefore please

to explain it a little.

THEOPH. All Beings must have a reason of their existence, in answer to this question, how comes it to pass that they exist? With respect to all created beings, the cause of their existence must be the will and power of their creator or former: but the reason of the existence of the uncaused cause can be no will and power whatever. And yet a reason

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of his existence there must be, otherwise his existence would be unreasonable and ground-less, and it would be as reasonable to affirm that he doth not, as that he doth exist; which is absurd indeed; for since it is true, of the existence of the meanest insect, that some reason there must be of its existence, much more must there be a reason of the existence of the first and most excellent being.

EUSEB. And pray what can be the reason

of this existence?

THEOPH. Absolute necessity of nature.

EUSEB. But furely you do not make neceffity the cause of his existence?

THEOPH. No, 'tis the ground or reason of his existence, that is, he exists necessarily, or 'tis impossible that he should not exist, his non-existence implying a contradiction.

EUSEB. If this be the meaning, I understand it very well. But is there any material difference betwixt existing necessarily, and existing independently of any cause, or of all

will and power.

THEOPH. I am apt to think not much, if any at all. Learned men indeed have chosen the first way to express and explain the absolutely perfect existence of God: but the latter, in my opinion, serves as well every whit to prove and explain the perfections of the Deity; and as it is much more intelligible to common capacities at least, it is more suitable

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to my defign; and therefore suppose you will

give it the preference.

EUSEB. You may be fure of it; for I defire and expect you should proceed in the clearest method you can think of, whether others have done that before you or no. There's no reason for following an obscure method, out of veneration to great names, when we have found out one that is plainer: No, the clearer and plainer you are, the better for me and every body else, I should think.



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SECT.

## SECT. V.

The Immutability of God's Existence prov'd a priori.

O proceed then. THEOPH. We have found that the existence of God is independent of all will and power whatsoever. From which absolute and most perfect independence of his, follows his perfect immutability and incorruptibility. For there is no will and power either in himfelf or in any other being which can alter his existence, seeing it is not subject to any will or power; therefore no will and power can polfibly produce any alteration in it, either by adding or taking away, or any way making it other than what it is. Where and when there is no cause, there cannot possibly be any effect: but of an alteration or change in God there is no possible cause, and therefore this effect of a change in his existence is impossible; and to fay this is possible, would be as abfurd as to affert that he might be the cause of himself, or might arise out of nothing, fince nothing may produce one effect as well

as another, that is none at all, no more annihilation or alteration of existence than the first production of it. I hope you find no difficulty to understand this.

EUSEB. None at all, fince it is very clear, that what can be affected by no cause, no power nor will whatsoever, must necessarily be always the same in nature, can never possibly change or be changed, and therefore must be immutable and incorruptible.

THEOPH. The argument, I think, is clear enough; and I much question whether it would be either stronger or clearer, if we were to argue from necessity (k) of nature or existence. However, you may take it thus from that topick. The first cause exists by necessity of nature: but this ground or reason of his existence is invariably and eternally uniform, or absolutely the same; therefore that existence or nature must be absolutely and for ever the same, of which it is the foundation.

(k) N. B. Necessary existence, necessity of nature, &c. unless as explain'd above, are no better than the occult qualities
of the Peripateticks; and indeed seem frequently in modern
authors to fignify the very same those occult qualities did,
that is, nothing at all. Let the reader apply this remark
where he may find it necessary in the following pages.



#### SECT. VI.

# The Eternity of God prov'd a priori.

THEOPH. IN nearly the same easy manner, we may prove the eternity of the first cause. It is uncaused, underived, and therefore always existed; for had it not always existed, neither itself, nor any thing else, ever could have existed, as we have before demonstrated; therefore the first cause must be beginningless, or from eternity. And as it exists independently upon all will and power, and cannot possibly be alter'd by adding or diminishing; so it cannot possibly be destroy'd, or cease to exist, because it must be invariably the fame. Therefore the first cause must necessarily exist to eternity. Or thus, if you would rather chuse it: absolute necessity is invariably the same, and therefore the being, whose existence it is the ground of, must have existed from eternity, and must exist to eternity.

Thus much for the demonstration of God's eternity, both past and to come. But it may be proper to observe, with reference to this attribute of God, that tho' it be impossible that,

that, especially such creatures as we are. should comprehend the manner how he has existed from everlasting, we cannot but believe nevertheless that he has been from everlasting: for there is a most manifest distinction betwixt these two propositions; fomething has existed eternally, and something has existed eternally in this or that manner. However, with reference to the modus of an eternal existence; the notion the schoolmen (1) have given us concerning it, feems to be abfurd enough, as they reprefent it only as a point or instant, existing all at once, without any succession of parts. This is scholastic jargon, which can serve no purpose, but confounding themselves and their unwary

(1) The strange conceits of some schoolmen, and some others, concerning the duration and presence of God, are so like Vanini's, the famous Atheist, who was burnt at Tholouse for Atheism, in his description of God, that it may not be amis to lay his abstract of Atheism before the learned reader. He describes God thus, Deus est sui ipsius principium et sinis, utriusque carens, neutrius egens; utriusque parens atque author. Semper est fine tempore, cui præteritum non abit, nec subit suturum. Regnat ubique sine loco; immobilis absque statu; pernix fine motu; extra omnia omnis; intra omnia, sed non includitur in ipsis; extra omnia, sed non ab ipsis excluditur, Bonus fine qualitate, fine quanti-tate magnus. Totus fine partibus. Immutabilis, cum cætera mutet. Cujus velle potentia, cui opus voluntas. Simplex est in quo nihil in potentia, sed in actu omnia; imo ipse purus, primus, et ultimus actus. Denique est omnia, super omnia, extra omnia, inter omnia, præter omnia, ante omnia, et post omnia, omnis. Vanini Amphitheat. Div. Provid. How like is Atheism to scholastic Theology, in some parts of it! For a full confutation of fuch notions, the judicious Mr. Jackson's Exist. and unity of God, together with its defence may be confulted.

unwary admirers; words without ideas, and therefore mere empty founds. For as the duration of the divine existence is co-existent with the mutable successive existence of his creatures, it must be of the same nature with their's, and his eternity must therefore be an infinite fuccession. Amongst us, yesterday was before to-day, and to-morrow will be after, or succeed to-day, but not be co-existent with it; and thus doubtless will it be in other parts of the universe, duration like space being uniformly and univerfally the same, or duration past, and duration to come, being of the same general nature, as infinite space upon my right hand is of the fame nature with infinite space on my left. I hope you understand me.

EUSEB. Very easily. Methinks those schoolmen had odd notions, particularly that is odd enough which you have mention'd. For my part, now I try in my thoughts to contract an eternity into a point, an instant, or a moment, I cannot possibly; but there is an eternity on one hand, and on the other, as there is infinite space on every hand of that point of space there before us.

THEOPH. You certainly are in the right. If these gentlemen can in their thoughts reduce infinite space to a mere point (m), then

<sup>(</sup>m) As foon as I can conceive eternity to be an indivisible point, or any thing but an everlasting succession, I will repounce all I have written on this subject. I know S. Them. Against

may they also reduce infinite duration to a mere instant, or a nunc stans, to speak in their own language (n), which is very like many of their notions, coarse and very sorry: But I shall leave them to the correction of one of the finest English writers (o), and proceed in the argument.

Squinas calls eternity nunc stans, an ever abiding now, which is easy enough to say; but the I fain would, yet I never could conceive it; they that can are more happy than I; but I think none can. Such phrases I find not in Scripture, I wonder therefore what was the design of the schoolmen to bring them up, unless they thought a man could not be a true Christian, unless his understanding be first strangled with such hard sayings. Hobbs's Treat. on Liberty, &c. p. 307, 308.

(n) Certainly, the scholastic turn, technical terms, imaginary relations, and wire-drawn sciences, spoil the natural faculties, and marr the expression. But the antients of early times, as nature gave power and a genius, so they fought, or plowed, or merchandized, or sung; wars, or love, or morals, ws n Mesa estiste, just as their muse or genius led them. The ingenious Mr. B——I's Enq. into the life of Homer, p. 129, &c.

(a) Others fay, that God sees and knows all things, by the presentiality and co-existence of all things in eternity; for they say future things are actually present and existent with God, tho' not in mensura propria, yet in mensura aliena. The schoolmen have much more of this jargon and canting language; I envy no man the understanding of these phrases: but to me they seem to signify nothing at all, but to have been invented by idle and conceited men, which a great many ever since, lest they should seem to be ignorant, would seem to understand: but I wonder most, that men when they have amused and puzzled themselves and others with hard words, sould call this explaining of things. Archbishop Till. Vol. 6. Seem. 6.



## SECT. VII.

The Infinity or Immensity of God prov'd a priori.

THEOPH. THAT which follows next in the order of nature, and of our ideas, is the immensity or infinity of the first cause, or the uncaused being. You see how all material things, this earth, the whole solar system, and stars, and all we see are bounded; they do not exist or move every where, but are confin'd to certain limits. And what do you think is it that confines them? For instance, why does not this earth fill a much larger space? Or why is it not a thousand times bigger? Is its present bulk, limits, motion, all stinted and prescribed by itself?

EUSEB. No furely, for that is all one as if it made itself, an absurdity we have already

confuted.

THEOPH. 'Tis true. For any being to settle the limits or extent of its own existence is the same thing as to give itself existence. Could the earth have added originally a thousand miles to its own diameter, then itself would have produc'd itself, or part of itself; and if a part, why not the whole? And could a man, when he came into being, have made any addition of substance to himself, that addition would have been a self-production; in other words, a contradiction. Now seeing all limited existence cannot be limited by itself, it must be limited therefore by some other. And what I pray can that possibly be?

EUSEB. Why, what possible cause can confine or extend the existence of any thing, but the agency of some being, that chuses it should be bigger or less, or move in a wider

or a narrower compass of space.

THEOPH. Right. But the first cause exists independently upon all power and will; and therefore his existence cannot be limited by any power or will, neither his own, nor any other beings. But if his existence is not bounded by that, which alone can bound or limit existence; then it follows, that his existence must be absolutely unbounded or unlimited; in other words, it must be infinite, immense, and every where alike; for, of confining or limiting his existence there could be no cause, none in himself, and none elsewhere; wherefore it must necessarily be boundless. What think you of this?

EUSEB. I think the argument good: but my thoughts are quite lost, when I endeavour

to conceive an immense being; I own this knowledge is too high for me; I cannot attain to it.

THEOPH. 'Tis impossible we should meafure infinity in our thoughts; but you see we can certainly demonstrate that God is infinite: we are certain of the thing, tho' we cannot comprehend it in our narrow minds. The schoolmen indeed, those undaunted wranglers who were for explaining every thing, tho' ever so mysterious (p) and incomprehensible, and asraid of nothing but being thought ignorant of any thing; have presum'd to tell us, that the immensity of God is but a point (q),

(p) Qui nescire aliquid erubescunt, & per occasionem ob-

scuritatis tendunt laqueos deceptionis.

(9) Nay some, as the nullibists say, in effect, that God is no where; fo Weigelius afferts, that spirits are no where, and yet every where; and Monfieur des Cartes, that they are no where, and yet exist. Some atheistically inclin'd are for confining and limiting the divine presence, to the primum mobile, as Pomponatius and Vaninus: While others, as has just been hinted, would have him to be no where, and yet believe he is. A most odd and surprising conceit! And no doubt either was originally owing to some Atheist, or terminates in Atheism, nothing being more certain, than this proposition, that which is no where, is not at all. It is therefore false, and an imagination that can be of no service, tho' hereby it is pretended God is freed from the dishonour of being present with any thing extended: but hereby he is excluded out of the universe, and is not. Strange philosophy! And of their theology let the learned reader judge, by their ridiculous, rather blasphemous theses of some of them. An papa fit Deus, an quafi Deus? An participet utramque Christi naturam? An hæc propositio, Deus sit cucurbita vel Scarabæus, fit æque possibilis ac Deus et homo? An possit respectum producere fine fundamento et termino? An levius se hominem jugulare quam die dominico calceum censuere? Hospinian Offiander.

as his eternity is only an instant. True, he is in his effence, and in the exercise of his attributes, present to every point of space, and every where the same, as if there were but one only fingle and limited portion of space for his existence (r). But to say, with these bold daring writers, that his immenfity is but a point, is at best affixing an odd found to the idea of immensity. Others have thought fit to deny the divine immensity, and to say, that tho' he can operate any where, he yet is not every where. But this is as impossible to be conceived, as even the scholastic notion of immensity just mention'd. If we can conceive properties to exist a-part from their respective substances, as whiteness separate from fomething white; then, and not till then, may we imagine power to exist a-part from a powerful being. Therefore that old Maxim certainly holds good, that operation follows existence, and presupposes it even there where the operation is. In a word, a being operating where it is not, is like a being ope-

(r) Ipse Virgilius in sexto Æneidos quem Servius ait ex plurumis veterum scriptis sabricatum, canit egregie de Dei immonstate.

Principio cœlum et terras camposque liquentes, Lucentemque globum lunæ, titaniaque: Astra Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus Meus agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet. Virg. Æ. 1. 6.

Explicandis his illa serviant ejusdem. Georg. 4.

Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque, Maris, cœlumque profundum.

rating when it is not; the one as possible, conceivable, and credible as the other; the latter as consistent with true philosophy as the former.

The divine immensity being now prov'd, I cannot leave the consideration of this attribute of God, without hinting a few conclu-

fions which it affords. And.

I. One is, that hence it follows, that God is indivisible. For that which is divisible, has parts; and dividing or separating the parts, is parting or removing them from one another, which an immense being cannot admit of. For,

II. Another conclusion is, that he is immoveable, because motion is a change of place; but an immense being cannot change place, unless there were two infinite spaces, that he might, in motion, change the one for the other.

with another conclusion, namely, that whatever is limited in its existence, or mov'd in any direction, (and all motion must be in some direction) cannot be the first cause, concerning whose nature we are arguing; but it must be a production of the first cause, or some other secondary, derived one. For whatever is limited, directed, or moved, must be limited and mov'd by will and power, or must be produc'd or created. Consequently, as so much of the universe as we behold, is

limited and directed, it cannot be the first cause, but must be the effect thereof, mediate or immediate.

EUSEB. This is very clear and fatisfactory. Now I begin to feel the force, and fee the great use of the argument a priori, or the argument taken from the nature of the first, or uncaused, underived Being: which certainly extends our views vastly, and carries them much farther than what we could conclude immediately from the appearances of things. From the nature of a first cause, we conclude clearly and strongly, that whatever is limited or mov'd, cannot possibly be the underived being. And tho' we may argue a posteriori, that God exists throughout the whole system of beings, which he has form'd, and always preserves; yet from this system of beings we cannot prove, that he is immense, or has an existence infinitely beyond the bounds of his creation. This is effected by the argument a priori, or by arguing from the nature of the first cause, who necessarily exists independently of all will and power, and confequently must be unlimited. But, pray, Sir, may not we argue the immensity of God from the absolute necessity of nature, by which he exists?

THEOPH. Yes, in this manner, if you please. The necessity of nature by which the first cause exists, being absolute and independent, is every where uniformly the same.

. . . . .

He therefore who exists by necessity of nature, must be uniformly the same every where; otherwise he will not exist necessarily any where at all. For a being, that without a contradiction can be supposed absent from any one place, may in a successive way of supposing, be supposed absent from every place, and then manifestly is necessary no where: or it is a necessary existent being, and not a necessary existent being at the same time, which is a contradiction.

Is shall only add, as to this attribute of God, this hint; that it is not in the least dishonourable to him (s), to believe and affert, that he is every where, in an Auguan stable as well as in the most magnificent temple. For as the sun-beams are not in the least sullied by any offensive matter they may fall upon: so neither is the omnipresent essence of God affected by any natural qualities of Bodies, it being his peculiar glory to act, and not be acted upon.

(s) It is not in the least dishonourable to him, whatever might be the intention of Orpheus in this verse.

Zeu nudise, pryise dew, edupers norew. Tho' Gregory Nazianzen quoting this verse blames very much the poet's stile as very coarse and impure; it is not unlike Arisophaner's concerning Jupiter's seve, when it rains.

Και τοι προτερού του Δι' αληθώς ωμεν δια κοσκινά ερε.2.
Aritoph. Nubes.

SECT

## SECT. VIII.

That God is a spiritual Substance, prov'd a priori.

THEOPH. TROM the divine immensity. we pass on next to the spirituality of his substance, which attribute I shall briefly explain, before I prove it; in regard the nature of it is not perhaps fo clear and obvious as those which we have already confider'd. By the spirituality of the divine substance then, I understand no more, than that this substance penetrates all other substances whatever, material, as our bodies; and immaterial, as our minds. Tho' these both are substances, and of very different natures; yet such is the nature of the uncaused, underived being, that his fubstance is in every point of space, even where these substances exist as much as if they did not exist at all. Further, the substance of this uncaused being is absolutely indivisible (t), simple, and uncom-

<sup>(1)</sup> Adias aros, ameredns, amogos, amegns, adixiperos.
April.

compounded, but is perfectly and invariably every where the same. These are the only ideas I can form of the spirituality of the sub-

stance of the uncaused being.

And that he is thus perfectly spiritual, may be proved from his being uncaused. For as he exists independently of any cause whatever, or of all power and will; fo there could be no cause prior to his existence, that could limit it to any place, or exclude it out of any, as we have just now shewn: Nor can there be, for the very same reason, any after cause, whether material substance or immaterial, that can exclude his substance out of any place or point of space, because he exists independently of any cause whatever. For could any particle, or part of any other substance, protrude or exclude the substance of God, then his substance, which is absolutely independent, would yet depend upon that particle, or part of substance, as to that place or portion of space where it is to exist, which is abfurd, or a plain contradiction. For he cannot absolutely be independent of all causes, and yet at the same time be dependent upon some cause or power, as to the place where he is to exist. Again, that the substance of the uncaused being is absolutely indivisible, simple, and uncompounded, has already been prov'd. Because it must be some power and will that divides, mixes, diverfifies whatever is divided, mixed, and varied: but

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but the uncaused, underived being, exists absolutely independent of all power and will,
and therefore there can be no possible cause,
neither internal nor external, that ever could
divide, mix, and vary the divine substance;
or there never can be in the least any possible
division of it, either actual or possible. The
conclusion therefore from hence is, that it is
spiritual and immaterial, seeing matter is divisible ad infinitum.



D4 SECT.

## SECT. IX.

# The Unity of God prov'd a Priori.

A ND before I enter upon the proof of it, I shall briefly shew how important it is in theology (u), to settle and establish this point clearly: an attribute it is of much

more

(u) Εις δ' ες' αυτογενης ενος εκγονα παντα τεπυκται Ενδ' αυτοις αυτος περιγγινέται, κδε τις αυτου Εισοραει θνητων, αυτος δε γε παντας οραται.

Imo etiam vulgo unius Dei confessio in quotidianis sermonibus in Buccam Gentilibus sæpe venit. Vid. Andr. Beyer.

Addit. p. 134-

The real unity of God is well describ'd by Maimonides, the most learned of all the Jews; thus, Hic Deus unus est, non duo, aut plures duobus, sed unicus: cujus unitas non est similis individuis, que reperiuntur in mundo: nec unus est specie, complectente plura individua; neque unus corpore quod est divisibile in partes atque extrema: sed ita unus est, ut nulla unitas similis isti in mundo reperiatur. R. Moses Maimonides de Fundament. Leg. in initio.

Hoc modo etiam disserie Is. Abrav. de unitat. Dei. Non est autem unus tanquam species generalium; neque unus ut species particularium; nec etiam unus instar compositi: hoc enim dividitur in plures unitates; neque instar corporis simplicis: hoc enim unum est numero suo, atque accipit divisionem in infinitum. Sed Deus est unus unitate, cui nulla simila

est. R. Is. Abravanel de capite fidei.

more importance in religion than is commonly supposed, and yet an attribute that has been the most injur'd by theological writers, ever fince fome began to dream, that the more mysterious, unintelligible, and absurd any doctrine appears, the more credible it must be, and the more likely to be a point of of divine revelation, as if there could be no divine revelation, unless it be nonsense. is not to be denied, but the " schoolmen " who abounded in wit and leifure, tho' few " of them had exact skill in the holy scrip-" tures, or in ecclefiaftical antiquity ;--- I fay " it cannot be denied, but these speculative and acute men, who wrought a great part " of divinity out of their own brains, as spiders do cobwebs out of their own bowels. " have started a thousand subtilties about this " mystery, such as no Christian is bound to " trouble his head about; much less is it ne-" ceffary for him to understand these nice-" ties, which we may reasonably presume " they themselves did not understand; and " least of all is it necessary for us to believe "them (x)." And still, "it were to be " wish'd, that some religionists did not here " fymbolize too much with Atheists, in af-" feeting to represent the Christian Trinity as " a thing contrary to all human reason and " understanding (y)". What think you, would

<sup>(</sup>x) Archbishop Tillotson.

<sup>(</sup>y) Dr. Cudworth.

would not the supposition of two, three, or more Gods be very shocking; at least would it not be confounding?

EUSEB. I cannot but think, "that (2) the absolute unity of God is of even the greatest eft importance, both to the peace of our

" minds, and to the interest of virtue; that

" many uncertainties and dangerous conclufions will offer, upon supposition of more

"than one; the errors may be infinite (a),

(z) Hoc, i. e. Deum esse unicum, etiam ad supremam devetionem, admirationem er amorem erga Deum absolute requiri nemo dubitare potest. Devotio namque admiratio et amor, ex sola excellentia unius supra reliquos orientur. Spinoz-Tract, &c. p. 235. See P. Glover Esq; his Importance of

the Argument a priori.

(a) Tho' it be certain, that many of the learned Heathens were perfuaded, there is and can be but one only first cause of all things; yet this notion was but of small advantage to the populace, because they durit not speak out plainly, and confute the prevailing polutheistic notions, and confront the effablish'd idolatrous practices. Therefore idolatry most vile and fcandalous to the human race prevail'd almost every where, and for many ages. The number of the heathen Gods is aimost not to be number'd exactly, some reckoning them to be upward of 30,000, and the Jupiters only to be 300: For they had a God or Goddess not only for every thing, but several for one and the same thing, as for sowing of corn Segetia, for its taking root Tutelina, for its springing Proserpina, when it bladed Nodotus, when it ear'd Volutina, and several more for other purpoles relating to it. Many of their Deities were the most vicious mortals, as Venus, Flora, Jupiter, &c. many most ridiculous, as the vices of the heart, and difeafes of the Body, Priapus, Cupid, Fevers, &c. several filthy, as the Merdivori, Cloacina, Crepitus Ventris, Sterquilinium, &c. many of them brutes, as the Theban Weezel, the Trojan mouse, &c. feveral were vegetables, as the Egyptian onion and leek, &c. and feveral were devils. Vid. Boccace de Genealog. Deor. Crinit. de honesta Discipl. Seld. de Diis Syr. Beyer. Additament.

" and their homage and worthip will be s quite confounded and indirected: there will hardly be any remedy, but to enquire after all religious pretences, and to worship every imaginary and unknown God: " hence there must spring all possible super-" stition and idolatry; and every absurdity will be embrac'd for fear of missing the " truth; and religion will have no founda-" tion at all, while the object of worship and obedience is unknown. If man therefore " will have any religion at all, there is no " poffible rational support of their depen-" dance, but the unity of God, whether " they confider the foundation of it as truth or no, otherwise they never can have any " united hopes or confistent principles of reli-" gion at all." Then I would gladly fee this attribute, fo important to divine worship, and our own comfort, clearly prov'd.

THEOPH. As there is and can be but one immense space; so there is and can be but one

first

Additament. Alexand. de Alexandro, cum multis aliis Mytholog. Scriptoribus. Often there were rude Squabbles, nay, bloodshed and slaughter in their altercations about the antiquity or superiority of their onion, leek, wooden, and other Gods: Which are handsomely ridicul'd, particularly by furward, who liv'd a while among the Egyptians.

Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens Ægyptus portenta colat? crocodilon adorat Pars hæc, illa pavet saturam serpentibus ibim. Essigies sacri nitet aurea cercopitheci,

&c. &c.

O fanctas gentes, quibus hæç nascuntur in hortis Numina! Juv. Satyr. 15.

first cause, whose existence is commensurate with the immensity of space. Consequently, as two immensities are impossible, so are two Deities, or two uncaused beings. Some pretend to collect the unity of God, from the unity of defign in the system of things, as if but one only intelligence could form and execute a regular harmonious Plan: whereas, we know in fact that several imperfect intelligences in our world may all concur in fuch a plan; much more may two or three, or more perfect and infallible minds, agree in contriving and finishing any system of things whatfoever. And as they must be supposed perfect in wisdom, reason, and goodness, as well as other attributes of the Deity; and perfect reason must always harmonize with perfect reason, perfect wisdom with perfect wisdom, and perfect goodness with perfect goodness; I do not see how there can possibly be any occasion of disagreeing. No argument therefore for the unity of God can be drawn from the uniformity of the system of the universe, which yet we do but very imperfectly understand.

EUSEB. What you advance gives me full fatisfaction. But cannot we conclude the u-

nity of God from necessity of existence.

THEOPH. I question whether so clearly. However, 'tis argued after this manner; there cannot be two or more beings existing by absolute necessity of nature, because all such

fuch beings, excepting one, may be supposed not to exist, without incurring a contradic-To make this more intelligible, we shall suppose there are two self-existent beings, viz. F. and S. one must be self-existent, or otherwise something would arise out of nothing, which is impossible: let then this one be F. but by supposition there is another, a fecond felf-existent being, viz. S. but it cannot also be said of S. as it was of F. that he must be, otherwise something would arise out of nothing, because this would be false, fince F. exists, who is a self-existent being; therefore S. cannot be a self-existent being for this reason, and therefore not at all a self-existent being. That this reasoning may be more plain, we may observe, no effect can possibly be produc'd without a proper cause: but when by a chain of reasoning, we are ascended in our ideas to that which is the cause. it may be apprehended to exist alone, without any effect whatever, except him who reafons; and even he may eafily apprehend the first cause would exist without him too; for when we are afcended from the effect fo high as to the first cause, there is no mode nor attribute of existence, nor any kind of neceffity obliging us to come down from the cause to the effect, and forcing us to suppose any being befides to exist: no effect can be before its cause, but the cause may continue to exist, after the effect does not exist, as well as after it is produc'd. Do but try, and you will find that there is no idea necessarily forcing itself upon us, so as that there is no keeping it off, or not admitting it, besides our complex idea of a necessary and self-existent being: even after he has raised up beings into existence, there is not the least contradiction in supposing an annihilation of them intirely, and his existence solely and

only.

Or you may take this argument thus: we may conceive two infinite lines, and two infinite superficies; but there is no possible conceiving two bodies infinite in all dimenfions. In like manner, there is no conceiving two infinite beings in one infinite space, because one infinite being alone exhaufts it all, and excludes every thing of the fame nature with itself, tho' not other beings of another kind. Matter excludes matter, a human foul excludes another from its own place of existence, and fo is it with an angelic spirit; and certainly an infinite being would fill up all space, fo as that another infinite being could not exift in it, tho' beings of different natures might, as material and immaterial substances. In short, as necessity in respect to truth, is the ground of one only truth of every kind, fo also is it the ground of the existence of one only necessarily existent being. From every other

other cause of existence infinite kinds and degrees of being may proceed, because will and power may infinitely diversify effects; but from necessity, as a ground or reason, one necessary being alone can proceed, and not two in reality, as if we could suppose two globes penetrating each other in all points within and without, those two would be as much one as any one could be imagin'd to be: fo two necessary beings existing in infinite space, and universally penetrating each other every where, would be in reality but one neceffary being, there being no possible difference between them. Thus I have laid before you this argument from necessity for the unity of God. And from hence I observe two things.

I. That one being must be uncreated; and suppose there be any number of millions of beings in the universe, all of them must be produc'd by the will and power of that one, or of some other cause impower'd and ap-

pointed by that one.

II. That infinite space and duration cannot be real beings or substances: but must be the effential properties of the one immense being, whose existence we have demonstrated: In other words, it is essential to him to endure for ever, and to be extended every where; and therefore eternal duration and immense space necessarily belong to his substance or effence,

fence, and cannot be without it, any more than extension can be wherethere is nothing extended. or duration can be where nothing endures. Immense space is the extension of the substance of the first and uncaused being, as so many cubical inches is the extension or contents of my body; and as while my body continues the fame, the extension of so many cubical inches is an effential property of it: so immense space is an essential property of the divine fubstance, which is eternally, necessarily, and immenfely the fame. But there is this difference between the extension necessary to my body, and the extension necessary to the uncaused being; if my body were annihilated, the space it fills would still be the same, because with regard to my body, space and extension are not the same thing: for tho' extension is an effential property of my body, as it is extended; yet space is not an effential property of it. But if the substance of the first cause were annihilated, (which is impossible) there all space would be annhiliated with it, because with regard to God, space and extenfion are the same thing, for an immense extension is no other than immense space. Therefore, as when we take away the thing extended, we take away its extension; so when we take away the substance of the first cause, we take away space.

So likewise with respect to duration; duration is the continuance of the existence of the first cause, just as my duration is the continuance of my existence: and as while I continue to exist, duration is essential to my existence: so infinite duration is essential to the existence of God, who necessarily exists always. It my duration ends, all duration does not end therewith: but if God's duration should end, then all duration would end. These are the clearest ideas I can give you of space and duration.

I shall take liberty to conclude what I have to offer upon this head, with some thoughts of that incomparable philosopher, Sir Isaac Newton (b), "God is eternal and infinite; "but not eternity and infinity: he endures "and is present, but is not duration or space: he endures always, and is present every where; and by existing always, and every where, constitutes duration and space, eternity and infinity. Seeing every particle of space is always, and every indivi-

<sup>(</sup>b) Deus æturnus et est infinitus, i. e. durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in insinitum. Non est æternitas vel infinitas, sed æternus et insinitus; non est duratio vel spatium, sed durat et adest, durat semper, et adest ubique; et existendo semper et ubique, æternitatem et insinitatem constituit. Cum unaquæque spatii particula sit semper, et unumquodque durationis indivisibile momentum ubique, certe serum omnium sabricator ac dominus non erit nunquam nusquam. Omni præsens est, non per virtutem solum, sed etiam per substantiam: nam virtus sine substantia subsistere non potest. Newton. Princip. Schol. Gen. sub sinem.

" fible moment of duration is every where; " furely it cannot be faid of the maker and

" lord of all things, that he is at no time, and in no place. He is omni-present, not

" virtually only, but fustantially, for power

" cannot subsist without substance."

EUSEB. Methinks this is a clear, intelligible, and very rational way of discoursing upon these points, the divine unity, eternity, and infinity; and that you have firictly demonstrated that there is and can be but one first underived being existing from eternity to eternity, and from infinity to infinity, that I may express myself in the words of that glorious author whom you have quoted. But then how should it come to pass, that many learned men, as I am told, have look'd upon this great truth as incapable of demonstration, without the aid of revelation; and that even the most learned men in the heathen world, as I have also heard, ran with the unlearned mob, not only into their idolatrous and Polytheistic practices, but also their idolatrous notions? How can this be?

THEOPH. Perhaps some learned men have despaired of proving the divine unity, by reason alone: but that does not prove, that it is not to be demonstrated by reason; because if that prov'd so much, then because the most learned men we have had have thought otherwise, and have attempted to prove this point by reason; we might say, that

that it is therefore to be prov'd this way. As to the learned amongst the heathens being chargeable with Polytheistic notions and prac-. tices; no argument can be drawn hence against the possibility of proving the divine unity, granting this charge brought against the learned heathen philosophers to be true, fince, as the Roman orator observes, there is nothing fo abfurd, but some have advanced it, as the immpossibility of motion, the fortuitous concourse of atoms being the origin of the universe, &c. But to speak freely, this charge I think brought against them, if it be brought against them all, or most of them, is not just. This appears from almost an infinite number of good authorities (c).

(c) Brevi etiam filo ad nectam faniorem fententiam, quam doctiores gentium et philosophi et hierophantæ sobrie et penitius arcana naturæ rerumque seriem scrutantes amplexabantur et mystice docebant. Ea erat, unicum esse supremana omnium causam, unicum orbis moderatorem in innumeris illis cultum; quem tametsi in vulgus ejuscemodi disciplinæ satis incapax edere noluerint: ita tamen inde facra instituere, ut quid ipfi senserint haut ægre posset elici. Nam cuicunque Deo quiquam faceret, non eum modo feorsim sed onnes Deos pariter Deafque ciebat. Quod omnem nimirum et multiplicem illam divinitatem ii qui कारामाध्य The five quassoquas five Sechorses uspos imbiberant, uno aliquo consistere, in unum contrahi debere, existimarent. Ita Græci, ita Latini, ita ni fallar, enam ipfi qui longe ante alios ob ridiculam Deorum turbam funt infames, Ægyptii. Vid. doctiff. Selden de DIS Syris, p. 62. Constat Græcorum, Latinorum, et Ægyptiorum abditiorem theologiam non tam plures quam unum supremum Deum agnovisse, uti et sanctiorem philosophiam. Ne infrequens erat apud faniores illud Aristotelis, Eis de au, monuoruμος, ες, κατουομαζομεν 🗗 τοις παθεσι πασιν απερ αυτος

True, they had Gods many, and Lords many, to the number not only of three, but of three hundred perhaps and more of one title: but even to many of them, there was but one first underived cause, and the rest were subordinate Deities, or Gods by a Theogonia, or Divine Generation. Orpheus expressly afferts, there is but one supreme being: the Egyptians, the most Polytheistic of all nations, affirm the fame: and not only do we find the most antient philosophers, as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, &c. but the most antient poets, as Orpheus just now mentioned, Homer, Hefiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, &c. of the same opinion concerning the unity of the supreme being: the Persians, those famous fun-worshippers, were of the same sentiment. And even an inspired writer seems

veoxues. Satis enim manisestam est, suisse in iis qui idola colentes, etiam ipsum Deum opt. max. timebant. Ibid. 71

to

Imo eusque rationis sub auspiciis et doctu nonnulli progressi sunt, ut hujus unius opisicis Dei causa, omnem cultum idola tricum abjiciendum arbitrarentur. Egregie Sophocles. Επ ες τυ ο Θεος ος του ερανου ετειξε: κ. τ. λ.

Est unus Deus qui cœli machinam solus condidit,

Cærulea ponti terga et infrænes notos, At nos miselli pectore errantes vago, Calamitatum sinximus solatium Formas Deorum Saxeas aut ligneas. Aurove ductas sussili aut eburneas

His dum immolimus, dum stato Augustos Die, Reddimus honores, et nos remur pios.

Oweni Theologoum. p. 261.
Θεος εις παντων βασιλευς το πατης, το βεοι πολλοι, δεοι πατος συναρχοντες Θεω. Μαχίπ. Τγι. Diff. 1. p. 5.

to hint to us, that the antient Pagan Polytheifts and idolaters, amidst all their religious errors and fooleries, were not without this apprehension, when he tells us, that they knew God, but glorified him not as God, and worshipped the creature more than the creator. Their Polytheism was partly a Polyonomy of the one God, and partly worshipping, befides him, many fubordinate and generated Gods, and also the statues, symbols or images of the unmade God, and the inferior generated ones. This is the very account that even some antient Christian writers have given us of the heathen Polytheism and Idolatry. Thus Auftin answers the Manichaans, who believ'd in two fupreme independent principles or beings, one infinitely good, the other infinitely evil; " perhaps you will fay, " that all your numerous Gods are derived " from one substance, as if Pagans did not " believe the same, tho' attributing several " offices, works, and powers to them, as " you do who have one God for one purpose, " another for another (d)? &c." And again; " let Faustus know, that we Christians " have not derived our opinion of the mo-" narchy from Pagans; but that they have fo " far degenerated, by their idolatry, as to have " loft the opinion of one God, from whom " whatever is, took its original." Nay, in

<sup>(</sup>d) S. August. contr. Faust. 1. 20. c. 10. etiam de civit. 1. 4. c. 11

this very manner they themselves explain their own doctrine of Polytheism; as Aristotle (e) who afferts "there is but one " only mover, but the other Gods are of an " inferior nature and degree. All that is faid " of the human shape of these Deities, is only " fiction, invented on purpose for the populace, to engage them to the observance of " good laws. All must be reduc'd to one " only primitive substance, and to several " other inferior fubstances, which govern in " fubordination to the first cause." Thus too Seneca (f), that excellent Stoick, expresses himself upon this head: " it is a small " matter how you call the first nature and divine reason, which presides over the universe, and fills all things: he is call'd Ju-" piter Stator, not because he stopt the Roman " armies

(e) Arift. Metaph. 1. 14. c. 8.

(f) Senec. de Benef. 1. 4. p. 111. et Nat. Quæft. 1. p. 975. To do the heathens justice, and not to make them worse than they really were, I do not think that it can be provid, that the generality, or at least the wisest and most thinking part of them did eyer own a plurality of Gods, but on the contrary, a large volume of testimonies might be produced both from heathens and christians, to evidence they be liev'd but only one eternal, supreme, unbegotten, and independent being, from whom all their other inserior divinities, vulgarly also called Gods, deprived their original essence. An infinity of testimonies might be cited from these heathen writers, Plut. Seneca, Maximus of Tyre, Plato, Virg. Hecairus Abderita, Xanophanes Colopboniensis, Orpheus, Cic. and a multitude of others. Many Christian writers have own'd the heathens believed, there is but one supreme and eternal God; as St. Austin, Justin Marryr, Lastantius, Arnobias, Cic. Lord King's Hist of the creed, p. 56, &c.

" armies in their flight, according to the hi-" storians, but because he is the steddy sup-" port of all things. They may call him fate, because he is the first cause of all " things, on whom they all depend: we " Stoicks fometimes call him father Bacchus, as he is the life of all nature; Hercules, as " his power is invincible; Mercury, because " he is the eternal reason, order, and wis-" dom. You may give him as many names " as you please, if you will only allow the one fole principle every where prefent." Again; "the antients did not think Yove " fuch an one as he is reprefented in our ca-" pitol, and other buildings: but by Jove " they meant the guardian and governor of " the universe; the understanding and ar-" chitect of this great universe: all names " belong to him, as fate, he being the cause " of causes; providence, as his wisdom go-" verns the world; nature, as all things are " derived from, and are supported by him." This is the genuine doctrine of the antients (g) concerning the unity of God, which has E 4

(g) Ευ τοσετώ δη πελεμώ κὶ ς ασεικὶ διαφωνία, ενα ιδως αν ευ παση γη ομοφώνον νομον κὶ λογου, οτι Θεος εις παιτεν βροιλείες κὰ πατιρ, κὶ Θεοι πυλλοι. Θεο παιδες, συναρχοντες Θεω, ταυτα ο Ελλην λεγεικὶ ὁ βαρδαρος λεγει, κὶ ὁ ηπειρος κὰ ὁ δακλαττίος κὴ ὁ σόρος κὸ ὁ ασαρος. Μακ. Τγτ. Diff rt. prim.

In tanta pugna ac discordia et discrepantia, unam videas per terras omnes legem samamque consentientem. Deam esse unum rerum universarum et regem et patrem, multos præterea Deos, Dei silios administrationis participes. Hæc et Græcus

happily escaped the wreck of truth, amidst the rocks of vulgar errors and poetic fables. Now who can deny it, fince the poets, philosophers, and antient Christian writers attest it?

EUSEB. According to this account, which you have given of the doctrine of the antient heathen philosophers and others, it should seem they were not so much mistaken as I have heard them represented; nay, that their Polytheism was not so gross and wretched as that of the old *Manichees*, whom you mention'd as believing in two eternal independent principles; nor so bad as that of some others.

THEOPH. Indeed what you say, I fear is too just. This, however, is undeniable, that a plurality of Gods, self-existent and indepent, is not only a contradiction: but, were it true, it is more confounding and destructive to the interest of virtue, than a plurality of Gods, of which one only is uncaused, the rest are either nominal or subordinate. Doubtless the true and real, not a mere figurative, metaphorical, and moral, but the real, effential unity of God, is a most important article of faith, the peculiar excel-

dicit et dicit barbarus, dicit qui in continentibus terris, dicit qui in oris maritimis habitat, et sapiens et sapientia destitutus. Max. Tyr.

Populares Deos inultos, naturalem unum effe. Cic. do Nat. Deor. lib. 1.

Την πρωτισην αρχην πασαι θρησκειαι κό αιρεσεις συγχωρεσιώ εναι, κό Θεον παντες Ανθρωποι επικαλεσι βοηθον, &c. Prochin Timæo.

lency of the Deity, and the only folid foundation of virtue, religion, and peace of our minds; the dictate of nature and revelation. And it is very observable, concerning all the different hypotheses relating to the Trinity, that their respective authors and followers feem all of them very folicitous to preferve and maintain the divine unity, how inconfiftent foever their schemes are therewith. For while they are inventing one mystery after another about it, some arguing in effect for a scheme of three Gods, others for a Trinity of names, or of modes or properties; still they are convinced that unity is so plain and undeniable an attribute of God, that whatever hypothesis they embrace, this ought to have a place in it.

But having infifted so largely upon this attribute of God, because it is of great importance; it is now time to proceed in the argu-

ment.



## SECT. X.

The Knowledge and Wisdom of God prov'd a pasteriori, or from effects.

THEOPH. HUS from the nature of the first cause, or uncaused being, we have prov'd, that God is an abiolutely independent, necessarily existent, immutable, eternal, immense, and but one Now please to observe, that all these being. attributes relate to his mere existence, effence, or substance, consider'd absolutely in themfelves: Which may aptly be call'd the primary attributes of God. But now we advance to a new set of perfections or attributes, which relate to the capacities, faculties of abilities of the uncaused or underived being, or to the powers which belong to his effence or Inbstance: And these may be stiled the secondary attributes or perfections of God.

And here I would ask you, do you see any necessary connexion between mere substance or being, and any particular capacities and

powers,



powers, as understanding, will, and power

to produce what is willed?

EUSEB. Let me confider .- No, I do not. We have numberless instances of beings in our world, that have no understanding or power to act, but are only capable to be acted upon, as the whole material fystem of beings. Therefore I can fee no necessary connexion betwixt mere substance or existence, and understanding, will and power to act. But does not the notion of a first cause imply a

power to understand, will, and act?

THEOPH. It doth so: but then consider how we come at the knowledge of a first cause. It is not from what we understand of his substance or essence, consider'd in itself, but from the effects which he has produc'd. Neither from his substance or essence in itself any way confider'd, can we infer his intelligence. Nor do we see any connexion between existing independently upon all will and power, and being endow'd with intelligence and power. Depending upon no will and power, is, however in part, a negative idea: but being endow'd with intelligence and power is an idea of a positive nature, and I do not see how we can infer a positive from a negative. Here therefore, with regard to the powers of the divine effence or substance, the argument a priori must be suspended, and we must resume the argument a posteriori, which is taken taken from effects. In this manner we are obliged by the imperfections of our nature, to prove that God is intelligent: God is an intelligent being, because there are intelligent beings: you and I are intelligent in some degree, and this we must owe to some other being, because we are derived beings; and if we owe it to some intelligent, dependent, derived being, that dependent being must originally owe his intelligence, and all other powers, to the first cause; for saying that we, or any other, owe intelligence to nothing, is asserting a contradiction, or that nothing is an efficient cause of even a glorious effect.

EUSEB. You say an effect cannot have any thing which is not in the cause, or of every effect there must be a proper cause: will it not hence follow, that therefore the first cause must have all the properties which belong to its effects? For instance, as figure, mobility, divisibility, &c. are certain properties of matter; therefore, as no property, as well as no substance can exist without a cause, and as nothing can give that which it has not; will not therefore these mention'd properties of matter belong also to the cause of matter? But you have already prov'd, they cannot belong to him; therefore it follows, either that he is not the cause of matter, or that what you have faid of intelligence will not hold good, that every perfection must have a cause; for may not intelligence arise from that

that which is unintelligent, as well as the obvious properties of matter from an immaterial being? Pray let me have your thoughts

upon this, which is a difficulty to me.

THEOPH. Intelligence in us must proceed from an intelligent cause, which cause must have intelligence either dependently or independently; if dependently, and by derivation from another intelligent being, that intelligent being must derive it from another intelligent being, or have it necessarily: fo that we cannot but stop at one first uncaused, necesfary intelligent being; for an endless feries of dependent beings is impossible, as we prov'd before. Our intelligence then is a plain proof, that the first cause is intelligent. But then the conclusion you have drawn is not just; which is, because there can be no real perfection without a cause; therefore figure, mobility, and the other properties of matter must belong to God: my reason is, because these properties are not perfections, but the necessary result of their substance: Or let us suppose they are the effects produced by God, this only proves that he had the ideas of thefe properties, and not the properties themselves; as any machine among us is a proof, not that the mechanic is the machine itself, but had the model of it in his mind. Some indeed fay, these properties of matter are negative qualities, and an effect may have negative qualities, which are not in the cause. But I must own, own, I have no notion of a negative property, but as no property; i. e. I suppose materiality can be no property of a human soul.

EUSEB. I am satisfied. Figure, divisibility, &c. are not perfections, but the necessary result of the united, combined nature of matter; and therefore no more to be found in the simple, unlimited nature of God than the ignorance of the human mind: understanding is a perfection: but ignorance, or the limitation of understanding, is no perfection, and therefore can have no place in a being, whose essence or nature is infinite or unlimited. But I will not interrupt you any longer.

THEOPH. Then, as we are intelligent beings, much more must be intelligent, who not only made us, but the whole creation, which in every part affords us most undeniable instances of his persect knowledge and consummate wisdom: but I shall not insist upon this delightful subject, the wisdom of God in the creation, but refer you to the best writers (b) upon it. Only I would observe; if a clock, or any machine consisting of various movements, and design'd to answer many intentions, and well fitted for those purposes, be an argument of the skill of its projector;

<sup>(</sup>b) Amongst modern authors on this subject are Mr. Boyle on final causes. Mr. Ray on the wisdom of God in the creation.

Mr. Derham's Physico-Theology, Mr. N——'s Religious Philosopher, Mr. Mather's Christian Philosopher, and several of the Boylean Lectures, &c.

jector; if a well-contriv'd edifice of an elegant form be a proof of the contrivance of the architect; and if a fine piece of painting or sculpture be a demonstration of an elegant tafte and genius in the painter or statuary; tho' neither the machine, the fabrick, the picture or statue have not the least degree of vitality of any kind, either vegetative, or fenfitive, but are only pre-existent materials ingeniously plac'd together and diversified: How much more must this system of our's in general, and even any part of it in particular, be a fhining demonstration of the intelligence (i) of its author? It must be so, since there is almost an infinite difference between the most curious works of art, and the most common, or the meanest works of nature. "What-" ever is natural doth by the microscope ap-" pear adorned with all imaginable elegance " and beauty. There are such inimitable " gildings and embroideries in the smallest " feeds of plants, but especially in the parts " of animals, in the head or eye of a small " fly: fuch accurate order and symmetry in

Si machinas omnes, tum generationis tum nutricionis perspexerint, nec tamen eas a mente aliqua, conditas ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia viderint; ipsi profecto sine mente esse

cenfendi funt. Hobbs de homine.

<sup>(</sup>i) Ποθεν γας η ταξις τω Κοσμω, επες μηθεν ην το ταντον; τα μεν γας ομματα διαρανη προς το βλεπειν κατασκετας: η δε εις υπερ το ςομα, δια το κρινειν τα δυσωδη, των
δε οδωτων οι μεσοι μεν οξεις, δια το τεμνειν οι δε ειδον πλατεις, δια το τειβιεν τα σιτια κ) πωντα δε εν πασιν ετω μετα
ΛΟΓΟΝ οςωμεν. Sallust philosoph. de diis et mundo, p. 17, 18.

" the frame of the most minute creatures, a loufe or mite, as no man were able to con-" ceive without feeing them. Whereas the " most curious works of art, the sharpest " finest needle doth appear as a blunt rough " bar of iron coming from the forge or fur-" nace. The most accurate engravings or " embossments seem such rude, bungling, " and deformed works, as if they had been done with a mattock or trowel. So great is the difference betwixt the rudeness and " imperfection of art, and the skill of na-" ture (k)." Long ago, when natural philosophy was far from what it appears to be at present, when both the great and little world, both the human body, and the mundane fystem, was so little understood, that the physician knew little or nothing of the circulation of the blood, the fecretion of the animal juices, and many other particulars relating to the body; and the philosopher was ignorant of the great principle of gravitation, and the exquisite regularity of the planetary. motions: yet even then the works of nature were esteem'd arguments of a divine mind; much more may they be look'd on in this view, now those great names are known amongst us, of Newton, Boyle, Locke, Boorebave, and feveral others. And fince our ignorance of nature is greater by much than our knowledge of it, notwithstanding all modern

<sup>(\*)</sup> Bishop Wilkins's Princip. of Nat. Religion.

discoveries and improvements in physick, philosophy, and astronomy; and our present state of philosophy, probably is much inferior to what it will be; it is infinitely reasonable to conclude from the visible creation the existence of a most wise cause of all things. Thus the Roman orator (1) argu'd; "what can be more evident, than the existence of a most persect mind, from the order there is a mongst the heavenly bodies? Again, the inimitable excellence and order of things is abundantly enough to evince that there is an eternal, persect, intelligent nature?"

EUSEB. But I have heard of a sect of antient philosophers, who denied final causes intirely, and afferted that things were made by chance at first, and not by contrivance; and that after they were made, they were then applied to their respective uses, which were not thought of nor intended before they were made; because they apprehended, at least said, that that purpose for which any thing is made, must be not only in order of nature, but of time before that which is made for it. Therefore they alledge, that there was no such

<sup>(1)</sup> Quid porest esse tam apertum tamque perspicuum, cum cœlum suspeximus, cœlestia contemplati sumus, quam aliquod esse numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc regantur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. z. Esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam, et eam suspiciendam, adorandamque humano generi, pulchritudo mundi, ordoque rerum cœlestium cogit confiteri, De Divin. Lib. z.

fuch end intended, as seeing before eyes were made, nor hearing before the ears were form'd, nor speaking till there were the organs of speech. So that, according to this hypothesis, these organs of the body were first form'd, and the application of them to their respective ends was a necessary consequence from the organs themselves. The fortuitous origin of things advanced by Epicurus and others, is an hypothesis well known almost to all the unlearned, it being so often taken notice of by writers in most sciences.

THEOPH. True, it is an hypothesis few are ignorant of: bur it is fo unphilosophical, and abfurd a conjecture, that it is strange to me, if any believ'd it, not excepting even the authors and abettors of it: it is fuch ridiculous triffing, that it is fcarce worth our while to expose the stupidity of it; and they who can really believe it, may believe any absurdity or contradiction whatever. For at this rate they may affert, that clocks, watches, and all forts of machinery, were made accidently with their movements, and adapted to perform such and such motions, and to answer their respective purposes; and yet these were never thought of, nor intended in the least, till the machines were made or jumbled together: and that even Homer and Virgil accidentally threw their letters into words, their words into fentences, and their fentences.

fentences into an epic poem, without any defign; and the defign of the Wias, the Odyssey. and Aneis, was not found till the poems were finish'd, and turn'd out just as we have them. No, this Epicurean conjecture is a mere philosophic revery. For there must be a mind prior to the world, that compounds within itself the ideas of all intelligibles, and their neceffary relations, and frames a model of all things, which Plato, and Seneca after him, call the immutable ideas of the infinite mind: every workman has a model by which he works. It fignifies nothing whether his model exists before his eyes, or only in his mind: fo God form'd within himself that perfect model, which is the proportion, order, and beauty of all things. Is it possible, that any should believe, that the beautiful order of the mundane system, the regular, uniform motion of the celestial bodies, and the mechanism of plants and animals so exquifitely and inimitably fine should be the effects of mere chance at first, since neither a house, nor clock, nor even a mouse-trap was ever produc'd by chance? Wherefore, to infift longer upon this abfurd and inconfiftent hypothesis, would be trifling, and a labour'd confutation of it ridiculous.

Therefore, notwithstanding this objection which you have laid in my way; as there are intelligent beings in this world, the first

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cause of things must himself be an intelligent and wise being, as I was arguing before. And now I shall endeavour to shew, that he is a persectly intelligent, and an infinitely wise being, by the argument a priori.



## SECT. XI.

The Knowledge of God prov'd infinite a priori.

THEOPH. I E have discover'd a posteriori, or from effects, that the first cause is intelligent or knowing: but this argument proves only that his intelligence is equal to the effects produced. Therefore, to prove that his intelligence is absolutely perfeet, we must have recourse to the argument a priori, taken from the nature of a first or an uncaused cause. We are all of us conscious that our understanding is limited and confin'd to very narrow bounds. And what is the reafon that it is fo? Why not more clear and extensive? Plainly because we have a capacity of just so much intelligence communicated to us, and no more. The existence and capacities of our minds are dependent upon the will and power of another, who can make our intellectual powers larger or narrower at pleasure. But the uncaused cause exists independently of all power and will: his

his intelligence therefore must be unlimited, because it is not bounded by any power or will. All possible truth and objects must stand clear and full at all times before his mind. For as he is certainly endowed with intelligence, fo there is nothing in himfelf, or in any other being, that can obstruct or obfcure his understanding. Seeing this power of understanding, as it is essential to him, must be absolutely independent of every cause whatever; and therefore as it cannot be enlighten'd, instructed, or improv'd; so much less can it be bounded or confin'd to any particular extent of knowledge, but must reach to all things that are intelligible, or can be known.

Again; the divine immensity shews the infinite extent of his intelligence. We have prov'd that he exists every where, and from his existing every where, he must have a perfect knowledge of all things existing, because he co-exists with them.

Not that infinite space is the organ which the first cause uses to perceive things: but being every where present, he perceives all things by his being present with them, as an intelligent being: his presence is necessary, but alone not sufficient to have a perfect knowledge of all things; for besides his presence, it is necessary that he be vital and intelligent, as well as omnipresent. Thus it appears

appears clearly, the first cause is omniscient,

as well as omnipresent.

EUSEB. It indeed does. But yet, as to one branch of his knowledge, viz. his prefcience, there is an objection often made against the possibility of it, to this purpose:
that he neither does, nor can foresee our conduct, since we are free agents; or if he doth,
then we are not free agents. Shall we deny
either? Must we? Is there no avoiding it?
And if one or the other, which must be set
aside? For I own I am very much pinch'd
with the dilemma, since you have prov'd the
knowledge of God is boundless and perfect,

and I feel myfelf a free agent.

THEOPH. Why, neither is to be rejected, fince there is demonstration for the one, and fensation, or self-consciousness for the other. Yet in attempting to remove your objection, some have set aside all human liberty and freedom, as the fatalists; and others all divine prescience of the free actions of men, as some moderns. But both are in the wrong: they are so who take away the agency of man. For if man be not a free agent; then he is no agent at all, but a mere machine, which does not properly act, but is acted upon; and his actions are not properly his actions, but the actions of him who acts upon him; and confequently, as to man himself, the instrument, they are not, nor indeed can be, either virtuous or viclous, praife-worthy or blame-worthy, either rewardable rewardable or punishable, any more than the motions of any other, tho' unconscious, tool or instrument. As reasonably may you be offended at, and punish a blind man for being blind, or a lame man for not running, as find fault with man for any thing he does: and as reasonably may you praise the sun for shining, or a diamond for sparkling, as esteem and praise any thing you approve in man, if he be no agent. But these undeniable and unforc'd consequences from this supposition, are absurd and shocking, and so must the principle be which they slow from, since from truth, truth alone proceeds.

No; we are all conscious of a self-moving power; and all our actions seem from experience to be free, exactly in the same manner as they would, upon supposition of our being free agents; and there is just the same evidence, that we are so, as that the world exists: and to every man who has not his understanding impair'd and clouded, by the quibbles and sophisms of schoolmen or scholastic philosophers, experience is proof sufficient, both of the existence of things in general, and of his own freedom or self-determination.

ning power, in particular,

On the other hand, neither must we take away prescience from God, because this method of solving the difficulty mention'd before would be as derogatory to him, as the other is debasing to man. As he is the author of

all

all beings, and all their powers, he cannot be ignorant of the possibilities of things. And as he is the great governor of all things, ignorance of the future behaviour of men might be of great differvice to him, as he must meet with unforeseen, unexpected conduct from them; and those disappointments might make him be at a loss sometimes what measures should be taken in his government of the moral world, and how to provide against future and unforeseen contingencies. It therefore feems to be of absolute necessity to a wife and perfect government of this part of the creation, that God should have prescience of human actions, as well as the events of things. Further, to all that believe divine revelation, divine prescience of all things is undeniable, fince there are many predictions of human actions to be met with there, which were given long before the existence of the agents, as of Pharoah, Abab, Jezabel, Cyrus, Judas; nay, of the whole Jewish nation; and finally, of the Messiah. How therefore any who believe that revelation, should yet deny the possibility of divine prescience is exceeding strange, fince it proves it not only possible, but actual. Nay, heathers believed divine prescience (m).

Besides,

<sup>(</sup>m) Esse quoque in satis reminiscitur ad sore tempus Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia cœli Ardeat, et mundi moles operosa laboret. Ovid. Met. 1. i.

Besides, there is no inconsistency between divine prescience and moral agency. For mere prescience has no influence upon the existence of things fore-known, because nothing comes to pass because fore-known (n); but it is fore-known because it will come to pass. nothing exists because it is known to exist: but it is known to exist because it is existent: just as no object is visible because it is seen. but it is feen because visible. I am now infifting upon the perfections of God, but I do not this because you know it, but you know it because I am doing it; this is necessarily pre-fupposed to your knowing it, and not your knowledge of it to my attempt. And, in like manner, should you certainly foreknow that I would proceed in this argument, your fore-knowledge would not be the cause of my future endeavours of this kind, but they would be a reason of your prescience. Do we not fee the fun shine? Yes, but any one knows it does not shine because we see it,

Sæcula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora,
Antiquum repetent iterum chaos omnia: mistis
Sidera sideribus concurrent: ignea pontum
Astra petent: tellus extendere littora noset,
Excutietque fretum: fratri contraria Phæbo
Ibit, et obliquum bigas agitare per orbem
Indignata, diem poscet sibi, totaque discors
Machina divulsi turbabit sædera mundi. Lucan, l. 1.

but

<sup>(</sup>n) Ου γαρ διοτι γινωσκουσιν αυτα οι θεοι, δια τετο αυαγκαιως εκβησεται, αλλ' επειδη φυσιν εχουτα ευθεχομένης, και αμφιβολου, περας εξει παντως η τοιου, η τοιου, δια τετα τες δεες ειδεναι αναγκαιου οπως εκβησεται. Ammon. Hermiæ in lib. Aristot, comment. 209, &c.

but we see it shine because it doth; and could we foresee it would shine to-morrow. that would not be any cause at all of its shining; it would thine as brightly were there not an eye to behold it. Thus the aftronomer's calculations of the conjunctions, oppofitions, and various fites of the heavenly bodies, are no cause of these phænomena, which would be the very fame were there no knowledge of aftronomy amongst us. Do not you perceive that knowledge and fore-knowledge, confider'd abstractedly in themselves, are the very fame (o) in their influence upon their respective objects; that is, fore-knowledge affects things fore-known, just as much as knowledge affects things known; but this has no influence upon its objects, and therefore that can have none upon things fore-known. Now as human and divine knowledge are of the fame general ineffective nature; therefore divine knowledge and fore-knowledge have no influence upon their objects. Turn but over your ideas of knowledge and fore-knowledge in your mind, and you will find they are devoid of the least efficient influence upon things. What influence has your perception of the equality of the three angles of a rectilinear triangle to two right ones? This equality

<sup>(</sup>o) That the fore-knowledge of God should be the cause of any thing, cannot be truly said, seeing fore-knowledge is knowledge, and knowledge depends on the existence of the things known, and not they on it. Hobbs's Treat. on Lib and Necess. p. 280, 281.

would be the same, had none of us ever heard

of any fort of angles at all.

But should this be granted, which none ! think would deny, who confiders the matter; and should it nevertheless be objected, that tho' fore-knowledge has no causal influence, yet it pre-supposes that the events fore-known are necessary, otherwise they could not be fore-known, and then there cannot be human agency: it would be a sufficient answer here. to, to observe that the manner how God fore-knows, is what we cannot distinctly understand (p); therefore neither his prescience. nor human agency should be denied, as the illiterate should not deny that the astronomer can calculate eclipses, and other celestial phr. nomena, because they do not understand how he can do it. Yet, as they may have some general and imperfect notion how he may do this, by observing and calculating the planetary motions: so we may form some imperfect notion how God fore-knows our future conduct, without supposing a chain of neceffary causes. For as persons, tho' but of common abilities, yet if intimately acquainted with one another, often perceive beforehand what one another will do; and as intimate acquaintance of greater penetration have a clearer and more extensive foresight of what one an-

<sup>(</sup>p) Και γαρτα μεριςα των πραγματών αμερις ώς και αδίας ατως γινωσκειν αυτες, αναγκαιον, και τα πεπληθυσμένα ενακόως, και τα εγχρονα αιώνως, και τα γενητά αγενητώς.

Απίπου Herm, in lib. Arift, p. 208

other will do, in given circumstances: fo it is reasonable to apprehend that the infinitely perfect God infallibly fore-knows all future contingencies, as well as all natural effects of necessary causes, without influencing the wills of free agents, by his refiftless power. In a word, we certainly fore-know fome free actions of the Deity, as that he will raise the dead, judge the world, destroy the present frame of our system, and reward and punish hereafter according to our present behaviour; because he has told us that he will do all this, tho' he has a natural power not to do as well as to do it: yet we are certain that he will, because he has said he will; and certain too, that our fore-knowledge will be no cause of producing these effects. Thus, I presume, divine prescience and human agency are both secure in speculation, and important realities.

I am pleas'd to find the sentiments I have been delivering confirmed by the reasonings of the antients, and particularly of Cicero (q). "It is an antient opinion, says that great ge"nius, derived down all along from the he"roic times, and not only received among

" the

<sup>(</sup>q) Vetus opinio est, jam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque et populi Romani et omnium gentium sirmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem quam Graci Mautium appellant, i. e. præsensionem et scientiam rerum suturarum. Cic. de divinat. I. t.

Quamvis nihil tam irridet Epicurus quam prædictionem rerum futurarum, mihi tamen videtur vel maxime confirmare, deorum providentia confuli rebus humanis. Id. de Nat. Deor. 1. 2.

" the Romans, but confirm'd by the confent " of other nations, that there is such a thing " as divination, and fore-knowledge of fu. " ture events. Tho' Epicurus denied no. " thing more than this, yet it seems a great " confirmation of the divine providence over " human affairs." And still they believed. that men were not machines, or the tools of fate, but free agents, tho' their conduct was fore-known by the Deity. For, fays Diodo. rus in Cicero, " (r) it was not necessary that " Cypselus the tyrant should reign at Corinth, " tho' this was foretold by the oracle of A-" pollo a thousand years ago." Well, what do you now think of divine prescience and human liberty? Are they of that nature, that one or the other must be discarded? Experience, that undeniable argument, not to be born down by any fophifms (s), will not permit us to exclude the latter; the dignity of human nature forbids us: and the dignity of the divine nature, the honour of the divine moral

(r) Non necesse suisse Cypselum regnare Corintini, quamquam id millesimo ante anno Apollinis prædicum suisset. Id. de Divinat. 1. 2.

(s) His difficultatibus nos expediemus, si recordemur mentem nostram esse finitam, Dei autem potentiam, per quam non tantum omnia quæ sunt aut quæ esse possunt, ab æterno præscivit, sed etiam voluit ac præordinavit, esse infinitami ideoque hanc quidem a nobis satis attingi, ut clare et distincte percipiamus ipsam in Deo esse, non autem satis comprehendi, ut videamus quo pacto liberas hominum actiones indeterminatas relinquat. Libertatis autem et indisferentiæ quæ in nobia est, nos ita conscios esse ut nihil sit quod evidentius et persectius comprehendamus. Des Cartes. moral government, and found argument, refirain us from discarding the former. Do not

you think fo?

EUSEB. I do verily. For certainly our not being able to comprehend fully any thing, is no good reason to deny it. At this rate, what is there that we must not deny? Since even the meanest plant or animal bassless the understanding of the greatest philosopher: no wonder then, if the modus of divine prescience does it. As reasonably might our blind neighbour deny that we have any ideas of colours, because he cannot conceive how we should come by them; as we can deny the divine prescience, because we do not, and indeed cannot clearly comprehend how the Deity can attain it.

But you know that some atheistical philosophers assert, that all matter, even as matter
is cogitative and intelligent; and that this cogitative and intelligent substance is eternal and
self-existent; and therefore our intelligence is
not owing to God, but to matter essentially
and originally. Now as they have been
pleas'd to assert this, we cannot but take notice of it, and consider what truth there is in
it, whether any or none at all. What say

you to the objection?

THEOPH. The Atheists, in defence of their absurd scheme, are put to many miserable shifts, driven to a necessity of advancing many wild and flagrant absurdities, which shews

shews their cause is a most wretched one, a pable of no rational defence: and this affer. tion is one of their many wretched abfurd. ties. For matter, we have already demonfrated, is not the first underived cause, what. ever its duration be, eternal or no; and therefore I will not spend any of our time at prefent in doing this again. And that matter a fuch, is cogitative and intelligent, is afferted without the least proof; nay, against the plainest evidence to the contrary; and it would be as reasonable to affert, that matter, as matter, is necessarily in motion; for matter univerfally is a substance extended, figured moveable, and divisible; and therefore is not one substance, but a heap of substances, distinct, united, and independent upon one another. This is most, if not the whole, that we know of matter: and therefore we cannot know, it is a cogitative, intelligent substance: fince intelligence is not any one, nor all of these properties taken together, neither extension nor motion, nor figure, nor division, nor composition, &c. Let there be ever fo many compositions, divisions, or alterations of matter, it will be still the same essentially, just what it has been described, an inert or unactive substance, do what you will to it. Therefore, if there had been a time, when there was nothing but matter in the universe, there could have been nothing else, not even light, or heat, or found or colour,

or any of those which we call the secondary qualities of matter. Whatever some may imagine, it is undeniable, that compounds are not really different from the things that they are compounded of: therefore let matter be ever so much diversify'd, and variously modify'd, it remains the fame effentially, after all possible division, motion, composition, or whatever you can do to it; and no other effect is or can be produc'd, but only a change of fituation, figure, motion and bulk, which is vaftly different from cogitation and intelligence: otherwise we shall have thought, not only swift and flow, circular and oblique, and in all directions of motion, but also thoughts of all various figures or shapes, spherical, angular, oblong, lineal, in all respects; and thoughts of all colours, blue, green, &c. Give me leave to add, that the properties of matter not only prove that it is no thinking fubstance; but some of them also demonstrate, that there is a thinking substance, essentially different from matter. For instance, motion, which either had a beginning, or it had not. If it had a beginning, then the first cause is an intelligent being; for mere unintelligent matter at rest, certainly could not move itself. But if, on the contrary, it be faid, that it had no beginning, then this motion without a begioning was either the effect of an eternal intelligent being, or it must be necessary, or be eternally without any cause. If it was the effect effect of an eternal intelligent being, this is granting what I am proving, viz. the exist. ence of an eternal, uncaused, intelligent being: if motion was necessary, or existed in. dependent upon all will and power, then no matter can be at rest, but must be in motion infinitely, univerfally, and continually, feeing there would be neither will nor power to fton or limit it; which is contrary to certain fact and experience. Nay, further; there would be neither will nor power to direct the motion of matter, either this or that way; and fo it would be univerfally and eternally undirected, or would move no way at all; which is not only contrary to fact, but is abfurd and contradictory. If it was neither necessary, nor the effect of an intelligent being, then it is an effect without any cause, for a mere endless successive communication of motion is no cause: but an effect without a real proper cause is an impossibility; therefore must motion be fo, without the existence of an intelligent being to produce and direct it. Thus this property of matter plainly proves what the materialists perhaps did not dream of.

But now it is time to proceed in the argument.

## SECT. XII.

The Power and perfect free Agency of God prov'd a posteriori, or from Effects.

First, the Power of God.

HIS is the next fecondary THEOPH. divine perfection, which we are to confider and demonstrate. We have already prov'd, that this World of our's is not an uncaused, underived, self-existent substance or system of uncaused substances. For it must be either uncaused and necessary, or caused, or neither caused nor necessary. Suppose it uncaused and necessary: but this it evidently is not, fince that which is necessary, or absolutely independent, is so at all times, and in all places equally, without the least diversity or alteration, as we have shewn concerning the first cause: but this system is not every where, far from it indeed, fince that is but but as a point of infinite space which it fills: and even this little portion of space which it takes up, it engroffes very imperfectly, there being numberless void interstices interposed quite through. This supposition then mult be false, concerning our system. The next in order is, that it is not necessary, but caused and dependent: and this is true and right But to suppose in the last place, that our fystem is neither necessary nor caused, but exists without any cause internal or external, is an imagination so absurd, that it is very probable none can entertain it. To fay there has been an infinite fuccession of uncaused beings, without one first uncaused and independent being, producing one another in an endless progreffion, is faying nothing to the purpofe; fince it is afferting a feries of beings without any cause intrinsic or extrinsic, or a series of effects without a cause, which is impossible Therefore this material world must be, not the effect of itself, nor of a series of dependent canfes, but originally and ultimately at leaft of the first uncaused and independent cause Let us confider any particular of it, whether the form, or the matter, or the motion, or fituation of it; it appears still far from being uncaused and independent: for the form is mutable, the matter divisible, the motion alterable, and the fituation changeable: it is mutable in all respects, and what changes ! hath already pass'd thro', and what it has to pass thre.

thro', we cannot fully declare; however, it is certain, that it has been much chang'd; and, no doubt, will be far more so than ever it has been hitherto.

Now, as we have prov'd that all the parts of this system were made by the first cause, either mediately or immediately, and are dependent upon him, and subject to him; it sollows, without doubt, that he is endued with power. An unactive cause is no cause at all, or a being that can do nothing is the same, with regard to operation and effects, as no cause, or a mere nothing. Again, ex absoluted in the simple of the first independent being to be without power, is imagining he is an impotent something, good for nothing, like the idols of the heathen idolaters, form'd with representations of several powers, but void of any real one whatever.

Further, we may argue his power from his intelligence. Thus, as an intelligent being, he must have a clear knowledge of both truth, and the possibilities of existences; but he could not have any knowledge of any possibility of existence, besides his own; but by his being posses'd of power, which is absolutely pre-requisite to the possibility of any other existence. Possible existence necessarily supposes actual power, or a powerful agent existent; for what can possible existence be possible to, but to actual power? It is possible, not to nothing, but to something, which can be

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G 3 only

only a powerful agent. It is nothing else than a downright contradiction, to suppose possible existence, and no actual existent power, because it is supposing something possible, and yet that there is no proper cause of the possibility.

The free Agency of God prov'd a posteriori, or from the Effect.

Aving prov'd the power of God in general; it follows, that we confider, and prove also his agency: which is necessary to be done, inasmuch as it is denied by some. Then, as there are free agents actually existent, the first cause must be a free agent, since they could not be the cause of this power any more than of their own existence. Experience, as we hinted before, when discoursing upon the divine prescience, will not permit us to question whether we are such or no. Even they who argue against our liberty, endeavouring to represent men as tools of fate or deftiny, acted by motives and confiderations, as a material, unconscious machine is by external force, making no other difference betwixt men and their machines but this, that men are intelligent, conscious tools, but their machines

machines unintelligent and unconscious: yet they cannot imagine how we should have any greater evidence of our free agency, upon supposition of our having it, than we now have; for our actions feem to be as free as they could be upon this supposition: befides, there is no argument against this, but a bare possibility of our being so fram'd by God, as to be unavoidably deceived by even experience or inward fenfation. As therefore experience itself is upon the fide of liberty, and it is improbable to the last degree, that the author of our nature has fo fram'd us, as that we should be under a necessity of being deceived by our own experience: further, as the consequences from the contrary supposition, that we are not free beings, are very shocking, being such as these; that then we are no more than machines, intelligent, conscious machines at best; that we are incapable of virtue or vice (t), unworthy of praise or dispraise, rewards or punishments, let our conduct be what it will, fince we are not; agents, but instruments, acted upon, not acting: the consequence from hence is, that human agency is existent. And hence it fol-G 4

<sup>(1)</sup> Πως γαρ ετι Αλεξαυδρος ο Πριαμε εν αιτια ειπ. ως διαμαρτών περι την της Εληνης αρπαγην; πως δ'αν Αγαμεμών ευλογως αυτε καταληφίζοιτο, λεγων, ε δ'αυτος αναινομαι; ει μεν γαρ είχεν εξεσιαν υπεριδείν η Αλεξαυδρος των τοτε περιες αιτων αυτον παρακαλευτών επι την αρπαγην. η Μενελαος των αγανακτείν επαιροντών, η, κ. τ. λ. Αλεκαης. Αρhrod. de fato, p. 88. Vid. etiam ibid. p 95.

lows, with the plainest evidence, that the being to whom the human agent owes his existence with all its powers, must be also a free agent, since there must be a proper cause of every power and perfection whatever. A self-moving, or self-determining power, cannot proceed from a cause which has not this power, as something cannot proceed from nothing; but a power of self-motion, proceeding from a cause devoid of this power, arises out of nothing, let the cause be endued with ever so many attributes besides; yet it is nothing with regard to the effect supposed to be produced. The original author therefore of man's existence is a free being.

Nay, let us suppose man to be what some would have him be, the flave of necessity, and the tool of fate, in downright opposition to certain experience, reason, religion, virtue and happiness: yet the first cause must be free, whatever man is; make him a tool; debase him, and destroy the interest of virtue and religion, in speculation; turn the moral world upfide down; let him be no more than as a very weathercock, the fport of de-Stiny, whirl'd about fortuitously this way and that: on this supposition he is acted upon, and that which acts on him must be acted upon, and fo on, till we come at a free agent, unless we will affert an infinite progression of motion, without any mover; of instruments applied, without any artificer to apply or use them: but this is a contradiction. For mo-

tion

tion without a mover is an effect, without a cause, or something from nothing, the same impossibility in nature as a real Product produc'd by multiplying cyphers into one another, is in numbers. Motion, without a cause, must have a determination all manner of ways, or but one way: but motion determined every way is no motion: and motion determined but one way necessarily, cannot vary; whereas this is contrary to experience: befides, motion, as before, is not necessarily existent; for if it were, it could never cease; but all motion would be eternal and unalterable, which is false. So that upon this supposition, it is evident, that the first cause must be a free agent. Even Epicurus (u) himself could not avoid owning thus much.

The

(a) Si semper motus connectitur omnis
Et vetere ex oritur semper novus ordine certo,
Nec declinando faciunt primordia motus
Principium quoddam quod fati sædera rumpat,
Ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur;
Libera per terras unde hæc animantibus extat,
Unde est hæc, inquam, fatis avolsa voluntas?
Quare in seminibus quoque idem sateare necesse est,
Esse aliam præter plages et pondera causam
Motibus, unde hæc est nobis innata potestas.

Lucret. lib. 2.

Did all things move in a strait line,
Did still one motion to another join,
In certain order, and no feeds decline,
And make a motion sit to dissipate
The well-wrought chain of causes and strong sate;
Whence comes this perfect freedom of the Mind?
Whence is the will so free and unconfin'd,
Above the power of sate, by which we go,
Whene'er we please, and what we will, we do?

Crecch's Lucret.

The divine Power prov'd to be infinite a priori, or from the nature of the first cause.

HUS a posteriori, or from THEOPH. effects, we discover the first cause is powerful, or a free agent: but this manner of arguing only proves that his power is equal to the effects produc'd. Therefore to prove that his power is absolutely perfect, or that he is all-powerful, we must have recourse, as before, when we were proving his omniscience, to the other argument a priori, which is taken from the nature of a first, or uncaused cause. This cause exists independently of all power and will: his power therefore must be unlimited, because it is not, neither can it be bounded by any power or will, there being none to bound it. Every thing possible in itself, must be so to him. As he is certainly endued with power, so there is nothing in himself, or any other, that can limit it. Therefore, as it is effential to him, and cannot be refisted, overcome, or impair'd; fo much less can it be confin'd, so as that it may be faid of it, hitherto shalt thou go, and na

no further: but, as his intelligence must comprehend all intelligibles, so must his power

extend to all possibles.

Corollary. And if the power of God is absolutely unlimited, so that he can operate every where, as well produce all producible effects: it follows from this consideration too, that he must be immense, or exist every where. A being operating where it is not is as contrary to all our notions of power, and the exertion of it, in producing effects, as a being operating when it is not. It is therefore almost association, that some not being able to conceive how the first cause exists every where, have therefore thought fit to deny his infinity. But of this enough has been offer'd before.

of the first eause, I think, is sufficiently prov'd. This material system, the production of his wisdom, power and will, it may reasonably be suppos'd might, had he pleas'd, have been made and form'd sooner or later, bigger or less, in some other portion of space than that which it now is plac'd in; and any part of it might have been otherwise than what it is; as the sun, which might have been one cubical inch larger or lesser, any animal form'd with some parts more or sewer than it has: as to our earth, why were the particles which make up the eastern part plac'd there rather than in the west, and those which are in the western

part put there, and not in the east, &c? Is

not the divine pleasure the reason?

THEOPH. Yes. Nothing indeed is with. out a sufficient reason of its existence; and this fufficient reason, in many instances, is the will and pleasure of the first cause; that is, this is always a fufficient reason, when it is indifferent whether a thing be made thus or thus, or be put here or there, or be produced sooner or later. Therefore observe. the question concerning liberty has no relation to an hypothetical or a moral necessity: but it is this, whether there is fuch or fuch an agent, or an immediate physical power of acting or not acting, or determining to do this or that. Which power will be exerted indifferently this way or that, when the reafons are equal on both fides; and it will be always exerted right in a being compleatly perfect. Such a being, if he acts at all, mult act only for this reason, because he will, when there is just the same reason for not acting as acting, or for producing an effect in this manner or that. But when the motives or reasons preponderate on one fide, that being will be influenc'd only by the prepollent motives. It should not, however, be inferr'd from hence, that if in some cases he will act without reason, he may therefore act against it: when he places three particles of matter exactly uniform or fimilar, suppose a, b, and c, in this order; and not c, b, and a, the the contrary situation, he acts arbitrarily but not wrong, because there is no more reason for one situation or order than for the other. And this exertion of power may indeed answer a good end, as it serves to consute our fatalists, just as he consuted the antient sophistical philosopher Zeno, disputing against the possibility of motion, by rising, and giv-

ing him ocular demonstration of it.

Again, let us observe, that were not the first cause a free agent, there could be neither cause nor effect in the universe; for every thing proceeding necessarily from a necessary agent, or rather being, in reality is no effect, but a part of that being, as the rays of the fun are particles emitted from it. Therefore Spinoza, that celebrated modern defender of atheism, who would have us believe there is no free agency in nature, confistently with his hypothesis afferts, that one substance cannot be produced by another, and therefore that the universe is but one substance, infinite, eternal, uncreated, and necessary; and this one only substance is God. And thus the whole material fystem, with all its contents, will be effential constituent parts of the first cause. But surely, that philosophy which leads to fuch conclusions as these ought to be regarded as the revery of a diffemper'd brain.

EUSEB. But yet was not this, or somewhat very like it, the philosophy of the an-

tients?

THEOPH. I meet with some hints which border upon Spinoza's scheme, as if there were no liberty: as Bacchylides (x) in Sto. beus, who fays, " man cannot chuse for " himself wealthy peace, or inexorable, or " all-confounding sedition; but fate leads us " hood-wink'd to our ruin." Thus Euripides describes the state of man; " it is not " permitted us to shun our fate, no human " prudence can ward off its blows, nor can " any thing else than endless and fruitless " troubles attend our contentions with it." In fuch a forlorn condition as this, repentance, prayers and tears would be indeed like external religious rites, the deluding dreams and folaces of a distemper'd mind, ægræ mentis folatia. The most learned of the antients believ'd and taught free agency, both in God and man; for they taught, in despensing evils, God wholly regarded man's crimes, and therefore man was the author, or carver of his own fate. Some indeed believ'd a fatality of events independent upon the choice both of God and man, and ascribed it to matter. So Homer brings in Jupiter lamenting the fate of Sarpedon his son, fallen in the Trojan war, and lamenting it, because unable to help it.

HUSEB.

Mop. opa d'ere quyen Deme; ere oppia to a recortate anda paras wpodupos ae woven eger. Euripid.

<sup>(</sup>x) Ountois an audaiperon at obsort at anapares April שדב שמשספרסוב במסוב, מאא בשוצףונישדה שבסטב מאאסדב בד allar yar awardapos desa. Slob. Ec. Phys. c 9.

better fate than that of some that I could name. For this heathen notion of fate represents God as unable to help mortals; but some systems picture him as above all fate and destiny, and yet in an arbitrary manner laying many under an invincible necessity of being vicious and miserable: he is free and able, but not willing to assist, and save such unhappy mortals. The most malignant creature has only a limited power and malevolence; but here is malevolence and omnipotence join'd together, the most horrid combination that can be imagin'd. Pray excuse this interruption.

THEOPH. It is well enough. I have prov'd a posteriori, or from effects, that God is properly an agent; and a priori, or from the nature of the first cause, that he is an all-powerful agent. Nothing now remains to be done, upon this attribute, but to point out the principal instances, or effects of his power,

will and intelligence.

1. And the first, in order, was his creating all things out of nothing. An amazing production (y), to be wonder'd at and admir'd, but not to be comprehended by us at present, however. And therefore much has been objected against it by Atheists, and even others,

<sup>&#</sup>x27;() However was an equien eval durapin, in tisan aitia myntal tols un espotepon esti usupon yenedal. Plato Sophist. God is an efficient cause, which makes things exist which had no existence.

others, from their not taking the matter right as far as it may be understood. For creation is not bringing fomething out of nothing, as out of a real, material cause; or using and working upon nothing, as the mechanick does upon his materials; nor is it God's dividing his effence, or emitting thence emanations, to be the materials of another substance: But it is making fomething to exist, which did not exist. Thus far creation is intelligible, and as much or more fo than the eternal, necessary existence of matter; for against this there is demonstration, but against creation only our ignorance of the mode of it: and fince the one or the other must be believ'd, either a creation, or the eternal necesfary existence of matter, it is infinitely more reasonable to believe that than this, because that is only a difficulty our comprehension cannot grasp, but this is a contradiction, and an impossibility. Are not we ourselves almost continually, in a manner, producing fomething out of nothing, as new thoughts, motions, and modifications of things preexisting? And is not this very similar to a creation (2), and as much above our tho-

Δημιεργον Θεον πραφισησιν ὁ Πλατων πασης εμφάνας τε θ αφανας διανοσμησεως εκ μηθενος πραποκειμενα γεγενημενίδι &c. Hierocles apud Phot.

<sup>(</sup>x) It is certain, many of the learned heathens denied matter to be self-existent or unmade, as Plorinus, Porphysius, Jamblichus, Hierocles, Proclus, & c. and consequently believ'd God to be the cause of it. Apparos actia tas was proclus.

rough comprehension, viz. making a form exist, which was not before, which is producing a reality in one case as well as the other? As there is a moving power, which we cannot fully understand, but yet are certain of; let us not then deny a creative power, because we have not a clear idea of the operations of it. Explain to me clearly and fully the manner how you move a finger, and then I will explain how God created the world. Here therefore there is one amazing instance of the power, will, and intelligence of the first cause, the creation of the material world. And how has he diversify'd matter, under innumerable forms, exalted feveral parts of it into living, growing vegetables, and adorn'd them, as well as brutes, with a vast variety of the most beautiful and inimitable colours!

II. The next instance of his power and intelligence, is his bringing into existence the immaterial or spiritual, conscious and cogitative world. Experience convinces us, that ourselves are substances or beings of this order; however, that we are conscious and cogitative: and reason persuades us, that we are immaterial. For it has been before prov'd, that a conscious, self-determining, and thinking substance, is not matter. Any material substance is not properly one, but a heap of substances; and the known properties of it are those we mention'd before, extension, divisibility, mobility, and such like, which carry

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not in them the least similitude to conscious ness, volition, and cogitation. From no obfervation, or experiment in philosophy, whe. ther pneumatic, hydrostatic, mechanic, or any else, it ever appear'd in the least, that matter is a thinking substance: and from no argument or reason has this appear'd with the least degree of probability, but the very contrary. For the materialists, we may take it for granted, will make cogitation, in all in infinite variety, to confift in motion infinitely diversify'd; consequently thinking in general is nothing but the motion of matter, or a thinking substance is matter in motion, and no more; for furely they will not fay, that thinking confifts of matter at reft, any more than running is standing still. Therefore let us suppose the material thinking substance to be whatever they please to suppose it, to be the finest particles of blood, or a portion of that fine fluid, which is call'd the animal spirits; let it be liquids or folids: yet their motion will not, cannot appear to be cogitation. For according to certain and unquestionable philosophy, matter at rest must continue unmov'd, without an external mover; and matter moving in any direction must continue therein, till it be put into another direction, or brought to rest by some external agent The material thinking substance cannot think, till put in motion by a mover, and the immediate mover be moved by another, and

this by a third mover, and so on without end: but an original mover, a primum mobile, there must be, which must have a self-moving power, or move necessarily: a self-moving power they will not grant, because this would be in effect giving up their cause intirely. The first mover must then move necessarily, and confequently motion must be necessary; no matter could be at rest; there could be neither more or less motion than there is; and this necessary motion would be only in one uniform direction, or in all directions: but these consequences from necessary motion are absurd, and so must the principle be, which they are deduc'd from. Consequently, there must be a being with a self-moving power, who being immaterial, as was prov'd before, may create other beings endow'd with the like power.

Nay, we cannot account for fensation, as the perception of colours, much less for argumentation, by motion of any kind of matter. It is now certain, that there are original colours of the solar rays, red, yellow, green, and blue; and, as the rays reverberated to us have more of one fort than another, so do things appear to us of such a colour. Now let the rays be of ever so different magnitudes and figures, and reflected with ever so different a force; yet mechanically there would, and could be no other effect than quicker or slower, stronger or feebler re-actions of the H 2 fensory.

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fenfory, or a brifker and more copious perception of one colour or light than another, but not the least distinguishing perception of colours, because there is no relation betwixt a fwift or flow, greater and lefs, brisker or feebler action of rays upon the fenfory or optic nerves, and distinguishing perception, any more than there is between this and length or breadth. In fine, as fensation is not a mechanical effect; so neither is argumentation, memory, temper, or any intellectual act, or mental disposition whatever. To dismiss then this abfurd hypothesis; it is almost a shame to labour to confute it; and hard it is, that we must be put upon proving the absurdity of such hypotheses, it is just as if we must shew that water is not fire, or a gnat no elephant: yet fuch things must be done in philosophy and theology too; for as in theology we have our wafer transubstantiating gentlemen, who pretend they can exalt a piece of bread into a deity; so in philosophy we meet with somatical gentlemen, who would perfuade us they have found cogitation, volition, and what not, perform'd by a lump, or fome collection of matter or other. Such philosophers, such theologues; the philosophy of the former, and divinity of the latter being much alike.

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## SECT. XIII.

The moral Attributes of God.

THEOPH. Aving now demonstrated both the primary and fecondary attributes of the first cause, or prov'd that he is independent, necessary, immutable, eternal, immense, only one, spiritual, as also intelligent, and powerful to the utmost degree of perfection: it follows, that we now take under confideration his moral attributes, or prove that he is perfectly true, righteous, good, and every thing else that is wife and virtuous. These we usually call his moral perfections, because they belong to his will, and are only so many modifications of it.

As he is a free agent, he must unavoidably have moral attributes or qualities, right orwrong: and, as a God, a moral character he must have, fuitable to that known maxim, without goodness, moral goodness or virtue, there can be no majesty, not in any being, consequently not in the deity, nor any efte m, love and reverence

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reverence for him in men (a); even power, tho' infinite; and knowledge, tho' boundless; are not sufficient to constitute a God, an object worthy of adoration and worship; for resistless power alone begets dread in impotent intelligent beings, and boundless knowledge alone creates, at the best, only admiration and association and association, as Plutarch (b) well observes.

"God feems to excel in these three things, incorruptibility, power, and virtue. In-

" deed a vacuum, and the fenfeless elements,

" have incorruptibility, earthquakes and

"thunders, bluftering winds and fweeping torrents have force and power. Wherefore

"the vulgar being affected towards the deity

" these three ways, so as to admire his happi-

" ness, to fear, and honour him; they

esteem him for his incorruptibility; they

" fear him for his power; but they worthip,

" i.e. they love and honour him for his instice."

As a happy being, virtue is of absolute necessity to himself; for, as without goodness there can be no majesty, so neither any happinels.

<sup>(</sup>a) Ει δ' αρα περι μπο εν Θυ βαλευονται θεω: πισευών εχ οσιον η μπο ε θυωμεν, μπο ε ευχωμεδα, μπο ε ομνωμεν μπο τα αλλα πρασωμεν, απερ εκασα ως προς παροντας και συμβιεντας τας θεως πρασωμεν. Marci Ant. lib. 6. de Seipso.

κ) Το θωρι τρισι δοχω διαφέρων, Αφθαρσία, κ) Δυταμών κ) Αρετη ων σεμνατού του Αρετη κ) θωστατού ες ε αφθαρτε μεν γαρ κ) τω κένω, κ) τοις τοχωοίς συμβέβηκε θυναμι δε γωσμοί κ) κέραυνοι, κ) πυευματών ρευματών επίφορα μέγαι έχεσι, κ. τ. λ. Plutarch in Vit. Aritid.

pinefs. " Every man (c) is posses'd of just " fo much happines; as he is of virtue; this " we must acknowledge, it being demon-" ftrable from the divine nature, as God is " happy, not by the enjoyment of any in-" trinsic good, but as he is in himself what " he should be, or because he is perfectly " virtuous." It is very usual, it is well known, among the antients, to stile the Deity the most happy and perfect nature, as well as the greatest and most venerable being. Amongst all their different sentiments concerning his attributes, there was no difputing about his happiness; for even Epicurus (d) himself, notwithstanding some extraordinary peculiarities attending his philosophic scheme, professes himself fully convinc'd of his happiness. Thus Lucretius, the celebrated Epicurean poet and philosopher, delivers his master's sentiments upon this head. " It is ne-" ceffary that the divine nature should be " happy, and therefore unconcern'd as to " human affairs, free from grief and danger, H 4

<sup>(\*)</sup> Οτι μεν εν εκαςω της ευδαιμονίας επιβαλλοι τοσετον οσου πες αρετης κ) φρονησεως κ) τε πραττου κατα ταυτας εςω συνωμολογημένου ημιν μαρτυρι τω θεω χρωμένους, ος ευδαιμών μεν εςι κ) μακαριθό, δι' εδευ δε των εξωτερικών αγαθων, αλλα δι' αυτον αυτος, κ. τ. λ. Arift. de Kep. L. 7. C. 1.

<sup>(</sup>d) Omnis enim Divûm perse natura necesse est Immortali avo summa cum pace fruatur, Semota a nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis, Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri, Nec bene pro meritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.

" felf-sufficient, neither pleas'd with our " good behaviour, nor displeas'd with it tho " bad." But it is as evident, that without moral excellencies, and much more that with moral imperfections the Deity cannot be happy, as it is, that pain is not pleasure. Upon the former of these suppositions, he must be without any happiness; upon the latter, he cannot but be miserable: and upon that other supposition, that he has no moral character atall, good or bad; he must have no happiness nor mifery. In a word, as something must be eternal and immense, matter, or some other being very different from matter, it is infinitely more rational, to conjoin, in our ideas, wisdom, power, goodness and happiness, with the infinity and eternity of this being, than with any of the known properties of matter. Upon the whole, we may conclude from the moral agency, the divinity, the happiness of the first cause, that as his natural, so his moral attributes are perfect. From his agency immediately is his moral character deducible, either a good or bad one; and from his being a God, and also a perfectly happy nature, we inter, that his moral character is perfectly good. I do not doubt but you apprehend me. Do you not?

EUSEB. Yes furely, fince here is no such abstruse arguing as we have had, concerning the divine natural attributes; tho' it must be own'd, you have been more intelligible than even I expected, considering the nature of the subject, and how it has been handled fre-

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quently by metaphyfical writers. I am glad that you are advanc'd to this part of the subject with fo much plainness and evidence, and that we are now upon the most amiable branch of it, the moral character of God. This being perfectly good charms and delights every well-disposed mind: it is this that is the fource, the unfailing fource of all our present peace, and the stable foundation of our hopes of future happiness: it is this that is the excellent glory of the Deity, the spring of his perfect happiness, and the most delightful object of our contemplation. How great is his (e) goodness! How great is his beauty! fince he is as much superior to other beings in moral excellence, as in natural perfections or powers. And therefore the common distinction of the divine attributes into communicable and incommunicable, is not altogether

<sup>(</sup>e) If there be a general mind, it can have no particular interest: but the general good, and the good of the whole, and the private good, must be one and the same. It can intend nothing besides, nor aim at any thing beyond, nor be provok'd to any thing contrary. So that we have only to confider, whether there be a mind that has relation to the whole or not. For if unhappily there be no mind, we may comfort ourselves, however, that nature has no malice. If there be really a mind, we may rest satisfy'd that it is the best natur'd one in the world. The last case, one would think, should be most comfortable; and the notion of a common parent less frightful than that of forlorn nature, and a fatherless world. Tho' as religion stands amongst us, there are many good peo-ple, who would have less fear in being thus exposed; and would be easier perhaps, in their minds, if they were assured that they had only chance to trust to - This however would be otherwise, if Deity were thought as kindly of as humanity. Lord Shaftsbury's Letter concerning Enthusiasm. P. 40, 41.

altogether just. I perceive, that it is impossible that a free agent should be without a moral character of some kind or other; that a being endued with only natural powers of intelligence and omniscience can be but as a mighty tempest, which mocks at all prayers, and destroys all hope: much more, that a being with infinite natural faculties, and an immoral character, must be still more terrible, just the same as the infinitely evil principles of the Manichaans, or the pitiles Molech, of the heathens: and that homage to fuch a Deity must be the most abject slavery, and approaching his temple be just like approaching the den of a wild beaft, or the neft of a dragon. Nay, even a capricious arbitrary Deity, acting according to lawless will, loving and hating, refolving and executing, bleffing and curfing, and doing all this, without any regard to the reasons or fitnesses of things, cannot possibly be esteem'd and honour'd by reasonable creatures, nor be approv'd by himself; and consequently must be a stranger to happiness, and belov'd by none, himself nor others, not even his supposed fa-For as he has no regard to any rule, vourites. but his own mere unguided will and pleafure, they may imagine in themselves, that as they are in his favour to-day, without any good reason; they may be cast out of it to-morrow, without any; whether they were taken into favour yesterday, or from eternity: even promiles

mifes and oaths could not be any fecurity or foundation for firm reliance, and chearful hope, nor prevent uneafy fuspicions and jealoufies; for after all, they could be fure of nothing but his capricioufness: mere will and humour are most uncertain foundations of expectation and hope, being the most uncertain principles of conduct. Nay, once more, a Deity arbitrary in forming his refolutions, but steady to them when form'd, cannot be the object of any cordial esteem and love, not even to his own favourites, because rational beings cannot esteem and value conduct so unreasonable as groundless choice, attended with an obstinate, fullen adhesion to it: much less can this being be loved by those who have the least suspicion, that they are not of the number of his friends.

None of these supposed Deities is our's; not a Deity of no moral character, much less one of an infinitely bad character, nor one of of a character which is all caprice and humour, be it sickle as the wind, or sullen and unvariable as necessity: but our God is all-perfect, in moral, as well as in natural regards, whose moral character charms all wise and good beings, fills their minds with the most exalted apprehensions of him, adorns and chears their hearts with all divine and devout tempers, and excites them to solemn, but chearful adoration of him, and to offer him their sincerest praises and thanksgivings.

It is this, and not his eternity, or immenfity, or independence, or evenhis omniscience or omnipotence, that is the chief reason and ground of prayer and grateful acknowledg. ment: for to pray he would be good to us, and to praise him for being so is rational: but to pray that he would be immense, eternal, or even omnipotent, and to praise him for being so, is absurd. But then this proves that these latter perfections are necessary, and cannot be otherwise; while his moral perfections are the refult of his will and choice. Consequently, as the divine moral perfections are grounded, not upon necesfity, but will; will not they stand upon an uncertain foundation, and our dependence rest upon a very deceitful ground; however, on an uncertain bottom?

THEOPH. True, the divine moral perfections are properties or modifications of the divine Will; but they are not therefore a precarious ground of our trust and reliance. There is no connexion betwixt them and independence, or necessity, take which you will; for if there were this inseparable connexion, his moral perfections could not be seated in the will, or they would be both natural and moral, which is a contradiction; also they would not be the objects of our esteem and love, but of our wonder and astonishment. But yet the moral perfections of the Deity, tho' grounded neither upon necessity nor independence, but are are fo many modifications of the will, have fuch a foundation as the most cautious and thoughtful mind may fecurely rest upon; for I hope to make it appear, that the Deity will no more act unrighteously than he can become a finite and dependent being. All will, it is well known, is determin'd by fome motives or confiderations; a well regulated will, by proper and reasonable motives; a vicious and corrupt will, by wrong motives: therefore, if we can shew that no motives, but such as are right and fit, operate upon, or influence the divine will; it will follow, that it is as flable and fure a foundation for our reliance, as even independence or necessity. Now, to make it appear that the divine will is influenc'd always by fit motives only; observe, that there (f) is an eternal and unalterable diffe-

(f) Suspicienda igitur Dei lex, illa cœlestis quam M. Tullius in lib. de republ. tertio pene divina voce pinxit; cujus ego, ne plura dicerem, verba subjeci. Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans sempiterna; quæ vocet ad officium jubendo; vetando, a fraude deterreat; quæ tamen neque prohos frustra jubet aut vetat; nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec promulgari fas est; neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet; neque tota abrogari potest. Nec vero per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus. Neque est quærendus explanator aut interpres ejus alius. Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immutabilis continebit, unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus. Cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet ac naturam hominis asperna-

The defcription here given of this unchangeable and eternal law, is so beautiful, that Lan Hantius, the most eloquent of rence between right and wrong, between virtue and vice, as there is between truth and falshood; that there is in the Deity a persect knowledge of this difference, and no possible temptation can arise, which can influence him to act contrary to the nature or reason of things. If all this can be prov'd, viz. an eternal unchangeable difference between right and wrong, a clear knowledge of it in God, and that there can be no motive which can induce him to act contrary, either to his own knowledge, or the nature of things; this conclusion is certain, that his moral persections are as immutable as those that are natural.

Then as to the eternal and unchangeable difference between right and wrong; this is so plain, that some of the atheistic philosophers are forc'd to own it, particularly Manabbs (g), who perhaps was inferior to none

the Latin fathers, almost seems to be ravished with it. That law of God, says this father, will lead us to happiness, which M. Tullius has divinely describ'd in his third book de republand whose words I shall therefore subjoin. Right region is a law of truth, consonant to nature, implanted in all men, unform and eternal. This law can never in part or whole he repealed, by senate or people. It is not one law at Athens, another at Rome; one at this time, another hereafter, but immutable at all times and places; and one God is the common Lord and Governor of all things. Lactant. 1.6. c.8.

(g) Neque enim an honorifice de Deo sentiendum fit, neque an sit amandus, timendus, colendus, dubitari potesti funt enim hæc religionum per omnes gentes communia. Hobbs

de hom. c. 14.

Si is qui habet imperium summam, seipsum — interficere alicui imperet, non tenetur. Neque parentem, &c cum sinus

of his own tribe in learning. For he grants, that we must by no means doubt whether God is to be honour'd, lov'd, and fear'd; that a child should by no means murder his parents, tho' commanded by the supreme power; that compacts ought to be faithfully perform'd, and obedience is to be paid

" to the civil power."

Not that we affert the eternal existence of things; but only that when they are existent, there are certain relations subfifting between them: or that there are certain truths relating to them, whether they exist or no. For instance, we say there is such a proportion between a sphere and cylinder, which is eternal and necessary, whether they are or are not. It is not the actual existence of a sphere and cylinder, which constitutes that proportion, for then their non-existence would destroy it. So, with regard to moral relations; we do not affert the actual existence of moral agents from eternity, but the real unalterable difference between virtue and vice. Yes, there is an eternal law of nature, dependent

filius mori quam vivere infamis atque exosus malit. Et alii casus sunt, cum mandata factu inhonesta sunt, &c. Id. de cive. cap. 3. sect. 13.

Lex naturalis est pactis standum esse, sive sidem observandam

esse. Ibid. c. 3. sect. 1.

Lex naturalis omnes leges civiles jubet observari. Ibid. c. 14. s. 10.

Cujus, scil. Dei, respectu, ipsæ civitates non sunt sui juris, nec dicuntur leges ferre. Ibid.

dependent upon no will whatever, which can no more be cancell'd than the equality between twice two and four: omnipotence cannot destroy this equality, neither can it abolish the law of nature. Were this law enacted by the mere authority of even God himself, he could by the same authority destroy it; but this he cannot do. Were it dependent upon his will, the same will might enact another directly contrary, and change virtue into vice, and vice into virtue, but this he cannot do, therefore the law of nature is not dependent upon his will. It is therefore strange some do not see the independence of this law upon all will, fince it is so plain; and was so even to the heathens. For thus Cicero (b) speaks

(b) Quod si populorum jussis, si principum decretis, si judicum sententiis, jura constituerentur, jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta salsa supponere, si hæc sustragiis aut scitis multitudinis probentur. Quæ si tanta est potentia stultorum sententiis atque jussis, ut eorum sustragiis rerum natura vertatur, cur non sanciunt, ut quæ mala perniciosaque sunt, habeantur pro bonis ac salutaribus, &c. Cic. de

leg. lib. 1.

Moral good and evil are not only such, because God commands the one, and forbids the other, but because the things themselves are so essentially and unalterably. As mathematical truths and proportions are not such, because God would have them so, but because the nature of things cannot be otherwise. Almighty power itself, reverently be it spoken, cannot make two parallel lines or surfaces meet, tho infinitely extended to the three angles of a streight-lin'd triangle amount to any less or more than two right angles in geometry; or in arithmetic, alter the proportions between two and four; to any other than that of double and half, or between three and nine, than that of a root and square; or, to name no more, is it possible, that

of it, that fetting it aside, " the vilest com-" mands of the most cruel tyrants would be " just as the best laws; to murder without " distinction, to confound the rights of fami-" lies by forgeries, to rob, to break faith, to " defraud and commit all manner of wick-" edness, might by human constitutions be-" come lawful and right. Which is just as " possible, as it is by human laws to change " poison into the most wholesome food, and " make black white, bitter sweet, &c." We may add, if the Deity made the law of nature he may unmake it, and frame another in lieu, as directly opposite to it, as light is to darkness: for whatever depends upon mere will, has no foundation but an arbitrary uncertain one. We must therefore look upon this law as independent upon all will, eternal

that a feventh in music should ever become a concord or an unison, a fifth or eighth a discord; for these things are in their own nature fix'd and unchangeable, they must be what they are, or not at all. Thus there is an eternal reason, why that which is good should be so, and commanded; and why that which is evil should be so, and be forbidden, which depends not so much on God's will, as on his nature. For if God could will that good should be evil, and evil good, he could deny himself, and change his own unchangeable divinity, which is impossible: and therefore I look upon that opinion of a modern Dutch author, Ziglovious, (tho' I would be fo charitable as to believe he knew not, and therefore meant not what he faid) as overthrowing all religion. The thing is this, that God may, if he please, out of the vast sovereignty of his will, command all the wickedness which he has forbidden, and make it our duty; also forbid all that holiness which he has commanded, and make it become fin to us. Mr. Gibbon's Left. &c.

and unalterable as the divine effence itself Confider, does truth depend upon will, or is it the effect of will and power? No furely: fubstances are, but not TRUTH: the first cause may chuse whether he will create any spherical or cylindrical fubstances: but he cannot chuse whether there shall be certain proportions subfifting betwixt them or no; for these fubfift necessarily: and tho' the substances should not exist, the relations will be in the idea, as well before as after the existence of the fubstance. So the supreme being may chuse whether there shall be parents and children: but he cannot chuse whether there shall be certain truths relating to them both or no, or certain fitnesses and unfitnesses of things concerning these beings. Once more: (i) as objects are not visible, because seen; but they are feen, because visible; so truths are not so, because afferted; but they are afferted, because real truths; and things of a moral kind are not good and fit, because commanded; but they are commanded, because they are right and fit of themselves. I shall now add no more upon the foundation of the law of nature, perfuaded what has been faid is enough to convince any unprejuc'd perfon; and thus much had not been faid, but because

<sup>(</sup>i) Το ορωμενου, ε δ.οτι ορωμενου γε εςι δια τωτο οςαται, αλλα τεναντιου διοτι οραται, δια τετο ορωμενου. Ουκ εν κ το οσιου διοτι εςι, φιλειται υπο των Θεων αλλ' εκ οτι ειλειταί δια τετο οσιου εςι. Plato in Euthyphr.

fairs:

because prejudice will not allow some to see things almost self-evident. I conclude therefore, that there is a law of nature, a moral rule, not made even by God, and eternal and unchangeable; a rule to God himself, as he is a free intelligent agent, and to all moral agents whatever.—But do you ask, how can there be a law and no legislator, or a rule and no maker of it? I answer, by necessity. To query further, who or what made that, would be trifling, since there must be a ne plus ultra somewhere? Can you, can any conceive, that God should make or produce truth? It

is no object of power and will.

The next thing to be confider'd here is the intelligence of God, fince a law or rule, without understanding, is the same as no law or rule. But he cannot be ignorant of it; it is not possible, as appears from what was offer'd upon his knowledge before. For as there are intelligent beings, he must be intelligent: and as he is an independent being, he must be perfectly intelligent or omniscient, not only knowing whatever is past or present, but foreknowing whatever is to come, tho' at the greatest distance of time. Since then God is omniscient, as has been already prov'd, he cannot be ignorant of the rule of right, he cannot mistake it in any one instance whatsoever, he cannot forget it, thro' any weakness or carelessness, he cannot have his attention diverted from it, by any other concerns or multiplicity of affairs: he cannot be deceived by any specious false appearances, or be in any respect so imposed upon by any fallacy whatever, as to make a wrong judgment upon the state of any things or beings whatsoever; but must at all times clearly, perfectly, and unnerringly know the whole truth, in all possible cases and circumstances, and must have the rule of right always standing before his mind, in the

clearest and fullest light.

Again, from what has already been demonstrated concerning the nature of God, it is evident that he is felf-fufficient. felf he is perfectly, that is to fay, necessarily posses'd: and as he is the author of all other beings, he is the fole owner and lord of all: and all things are absolutely in his power, and at his disposal. Nor is there any power that can be exerted in bar of his actual possesfion, nor any right or claim that can be pretended, in opposition to his title. And this holds good, not only with regard to all actual, but all possible existences, because no beings can come into future existence, but by his act and will; and therefore must receive their being and powers wholly from him, confequently must be his, by the same absolute right that any created thing is his. And this right must be in all cases, and for ever the fame; because it will be for ever true, that God has created, and is the absolute proprietor of all. He therefore who is always fully polfels'd fefs'd of all being without exception, can never be in want of any thing, nor possibly have any object of desire and hope, or any interest to pursue which he wants to secure, nor any interest to guard which he is in danger of losing, for all things are absolutely and eternally his own. Therefore, he who has nothing to desire or hope, to gain or lose, can never be drawn off from the steady observance of the rule of right, by any prospects of advantage whatever. These have often great and bad effects upon our impersect minds, but can have no influence upon the all-persect mind. This I think is clear.

EUSEB. Nothing can be more fo. Have

you any thing more to advance?

THEOPH. Yes, Sir; the argument is not yet finish'd. We must now take in the divine power, which I have before shewn to be absolutely unlimited. Whence it follows, that God cannot in any part of his conduct be hinder'd, aw'd, or over-rul'd by any power, as there is no power, but what, strictly speaking, is his power, which he can controul and over-rule as he pleases. He therefore who cannot be restrain'd or oppos'd, but can restrain and controul all other powers at pleasure, cannot possibly by any fear or force be deterr'd and restrain'd at any time from following the rule of right. Do you see this?

EUSEB. Very clearly.

THEOPH. Well then, listen to the grand inference, which is, that the being who cannot be ignorant of the rule of right, who can never forget it, nor be deceived in any thing relating toit; who can never be influenc'd by any motives of advantage, who can never be deterr'd, aw'd, molested or hinder'd in any of his actions; can have no rule or motive to determine and direct his actions, but the rule of right, or the fitnesses of things, nor any biass to incline him to depart from it. What do you think?

EUSEB. I think the conclusion is irrefisti-

ble; and we are fure God never will.

THEOPH. If he should, he could not avoid disturbing the peace and harmony of his own mind, which is as necessary to his happiness as it is to our's. For should he ever depart from this rule of right, he must be conscious to himself that he has done wrong, and would necessarily be self-condemn'd, and must therefore be more miserable than other beings; for other beings might plead in their favour, the influence of motives, passions, hopes, fears; but the great God could have no fuch plea or excuse, and therefore his consciousness of having done wrong would introduce into his mind an infinite and everlafting fense of the most inexcusable guilt; which is abfurd, and inconfistent with the perfection of his nature.

We may therefore argue, if God is happy, he must be holy, or have a steady regard to

what is true, right, and fit. And, doubtless, happy he is; this is as certain, as it is, that his wisdom is consummate, and his power refiftless; for every unhappy being is therefore so, either because he is detective in one, or both these regards; either because he knows not what happiness is, or how it is to be attain'd; or because he has not power proportionable to his knowledge. It is not to be denied, but every fentible being would be happy; and therefore all beings in a state of uneafiness, owe it to one or both of the reasons just affign'd, and not to will or choice. But the first cause cannot be unhappy, for either of thole reasons, either impersect wisdom or imperfect power; fince we have prov'd his knowledge and power both to be perfect. As a most perfectly happy being, he must be free from all tempers diffonant to the nature of things, or the eternal law, or rule of right and wrong, fit and unfit, because all wrong tempers are not only contrary to that rule, but to the peace and happiness of every intelligent, moral being, as we find by experience, and conclude by just reasoning. Every moral being must approve of this rule as good, and therefore must disapprove all transgressing of it. Therefore, as God has this rule always before him, and is a happy being, he is not conscious of any temper or conduct contrary to it: he is a stranger to every thing wrong: as, for instance; to envy, there being none

to be envied, none superior or equal to himself, in perfection or happiness: to fear, that
great source of moral disorder, there being
no wisdom or power, but what is derived
from him, dependent upon him, and subject
to him: to malice, revenge, and all such
tempers as are owing to want and weakness,
to some ill turn, either real or imaginary,
which the malevolent sufferer could not prevent. Any of these tempers is tormenting,
and therefore cannot subsist but in an imperfect being, it being impossible that they should
proceed from mere choice.

COROLLARY. Therefore, by the way, the Manichæan hypothesis concerning their evil principle, Hyle (k) or Demon, is absurd; because it is in effect to suppose an infinitely powerful being either would not, or could not be happy, either of which suppositions is absurd: for to suppose an infinite principle could not be happy, is a contradiction; and to suppose he would not, is as absurd, and contrary to all sense, as the former is to all reason.

But further; the first cause must be a stranger to all pride and self-elation, since he cannot be ignorant of himself, nor despise other beings, which are his own offspring, and

<sup>(</sup>k) Pagani bona et mala, tetra et splendida, perpetua et caduca, mutabilia et certa, corporalia et divina, unum habere principium dogmitizant. His ego valde contraria censes, qui bonis omnibus principium fateor Deum, contrariis verò Hylen, sic enim mali principium et naturam theologus nesser appellat. S-Aug. cont. Faust.

and when confider'd as fuch; for this would argue them despicable, which they cannot possibly be as coming from him. This moral disorder now under consideration, is the most incident to the weakest and narrowest minds, as turnid vapours are the most prevalent in the weakest constitutions. Thus, I might proceed to shew of every other moral diforder, that God is free from them univerfally: but as I have given a sufficient specimen of proving the infinitely perfect moral character of God, from his omniscience, omnipotence, and perfect happiness; I shall leave it to you to argue and prove his perfect freedom from every other moral imperfection. From the whole, this conclusion cannot be denied, that God will certainly be perfectly righteous, tho' he is not necessitated to be so.

EUSEB. For my own part, I think it cannot be denied; the conclusion seems to me very fair and natural: my doubts and scruples relating to the moral perfections of God are gone, and I am quite satisfied by your method of arguing, that he is unchangeable in these, as well as in his other attributes, both primary and secondary. I see infinite power, knowledge, goodness, under the direction of a most steady regard to the unalterable rule of right and wrong, are unfailing principles, which may be relied upon as surely as sate or necessity; and therefore he who is posses'd of them will eternally act like himself, there

being

being no cause within or without himself. that can impair his power, limit and corrupt his goodness, diminish his knowledge, and divert him in the least from his steady regard to right and equity in all cases. No, his knowledge can never possibly become ignorance, his power dwindle into weakness, his goodness turn into malice, his purity and holiness become the very reverse. He has no-thing to hope or promise himself, from a violation of the eternal law of nature; and he has nothing to fear from his constant, most perfect observance of it. And his happiness forbids the least suspicion of his being disaffected to this primary, most fundamental, and immutable rule. As reasonable would it be to imagine, that the fun is a globe of ice, or a body as opaque as any rock or mountain, as that the Deity, the happiest being, is averse to this law. No propenfity in himfelf, no prospect from others, can make him swerve from it in the least. Even the most immoral part of our own species (1), it is observed,

<sup>(8)</sup> Neque enim credebatur Pagolus a tanto facinore, (videbicet Julium Pontificem opprimendi quamvis inermem) vel fui bonitate, vel animi confcientia abilinuisse; quod in hemiata celeratum, qui et propria sorore utebatur, et consobrinos aesotesque dominandi causa e medio sustulerat, hujusmodi pu affectus cadere non viderentur. Cum igitur hac de re varie effent sapientum virorum sententite; concluserunt tandem id e, i. e. Pagolo, accidisse, quod ita comparatum set, ut nomine neque plane pravi esse queant, neque persecte boar. Machavel in Liv. lib. 3. cap. 5.

who are guilty of the most horrid crimes, are not so desperately vicious, but they would chuse to obtain all the same advantages, without their crimes, that they get by them, even the they were fure of going unpunish'd for them. And shall we not have at least as fayourable a fentiment of the moral temper of God? He will be steady and felf-confistent one time as well as another, it being as much a contradiction to suppose him to be the contrary, as it would be to suppose one and the fame being, at the same time, is not one and the fame. Therefore his unconstrain'd, and most free choice, will be as uniform as the effects of necessary causes: and it does not at all stagger our reliance upon his moral conduct, that he has a natural power of doing wrong; fuch a power, it must be own'd, there is, fince he who can speak truth, can also affert a falshood, as he who knows any thing to be straight, also knows what is crooked:

Quis enim aut unquam fuit, aut avaritia tam ardenti aut tam effrænatis cupiditatibus, ut eandem illam rem quam adipifei scelere quovis velit non multis partibus malit ad se, etiams omni impunitate proposita, sine facinore quam illo

moco pervenire i Cic. de finib. 1. 3.

Ταυτα δε ε μενδί αυτο κακονημαρτανον ανθραστοι, αυτη αν τη ουτις νανη, ει δε ό μεν μοιχευων, την μεν μοιχείαν ης ει τανακον, την δε ηδιουν αγαθον. ο δε φενευων τον μεν φουον υχειαν κακον, τα δε χρηματα αγαθα ο δε εχθρα κακως το αν, το δε τον εχθρα αμινεθαι, αγαθον. κ) παντα ετως αμαρτανει ζυχη, κ) δί αγαθοντιτα χινεται τα καια. Αμαρτανει μεν εν ζυχη, οτι εριται αγαθον, πλαναται δε περι το αγαθον, κ. τ. λ. Sallust, Pullotoph, de Diis et mundo, p. 23.

crooked; and he who does right, can do wrong; as the same hand, which only opens a vein, could also commit murder. But notwithstanding this natural power in the Deity. all is fafe, his right conduct is certain, and our expectations from him fure, inafmuch as he will not act without sufficient reason. much less quite against all possible induce-I am very fure a man in an agreeable condition will not destroy himself, as sure as that a stone cannot of itself ascend, not because he cannot do it, but because he will not do it; and his not willing it, gives me just the same assurance as his not having the power would: I fee my friend fometimes standing upon a precipice, but have not the least fear that he will throw himself down headlong. And why should I have any fearful furmize, left my almighty friend should in the least infringe the eternal law of nature? He will not do it, and that is the same to me as if he could not in any possible sense whatever: nay, I know he cannot do it, consider'd as a fenfible, as well as a rational and moral being. In my turn therefore I conclude, that you have laid before me foundations for reliance upon his righteous and good conduct, more firm than the foundations of the earth; for they shall be removed, but those shall continue the same, an unmoveable ground of all our trust and hopes in him.

THEOPH. This argument is of great importance, and I am glad you see the truth, and seel the force of it. Give me leave to adapt it to the memory, and render it a little portable, in this concise summary.

I. God is prefent every where, fees all

things, and cannot therefore be deceiv'd.

II. He is posses'd of all things, and can have no more, and therefore cannot be allur'd by any interests, desires, hopes, or prospects of gain.

III. He is infinitely fuperior to all in power,

and therefore cannot be over-rul'd.

IV. A being that cannot be deceiv'd, allur'd, nor over-rul'd, can have no other rule to govern himself by, but the rule of right.

V. God having always govern'd himself by this rule, has always been perfectly happy; and continuing always to govern himself by this rule only, will always continue to be

perfectly happy. I add,

VI. Man is made in the image of God, that is, he is made an intellectual being. So far therefore as man doth employ his intellectual faculties as God employs his, fo far man is happy; and no farther. You will easily remember this.

EUSEB. I thank you, Sir; I shall be ingrateful to you, and no friend to myself,

should I ever forget it.

THEOPH. Now it is time to make a pause, and consider what we have done. We have fully

fully and clearly prov'd both the existence and perfections of God, natural and moral: and therefore hope, the request you were pleas'd to make, is perform'd. However, let us now we are got to the end of our journey, look back upon the road we have taken. and the most remarkable things that have occurr'd to our observation as we have been going along. The path indeed, which has brought us where we now are, is new; and, as far as I can find, untravelled by any before us: but it lies very plain and streight, so that we may be almost surprized, that this should be fact. And a pleasant one it has been to us both, I believe; as to myself, I am sure it has; and as to you, you have given me reason to apprehend this has been your cafe. You have had no reason to complain of hard words, uncommon terms, and odd phrases; and it is hoped, neither of any fophistical reasonings, much less of any unmeaning scholastic jargon, and metaphyfical nonfense. We have been treading upon fure ground, and taken a road, which has laid obvious before us from first to last, and preserved us from perplexing mazes and labyrinths: and the variety and strength of our topicks have exempted us from being tempted to lay any stress upon feeble and unconclusive arguments. We see no substance, be its metaphyfical nature what it will, material or spiritual, can be a proper efficient cause, unless endued with power, will, and intelligence;

intelligence; any other being or substance whatever being the very same, with regard to efficiency, as no fubstance; for that which can do nothing is no cause: but no being can do any thing, but fuch as is posses'd both of power and intelligence. Upon this plain, certain, and incontestable principle we have all along proceeded, and from hence we have drawn most of our conclusions: and by this clue alone we have most easily and pleasantly kept our way, and reach'd the end we aim'd at: this has been as our compass, or the polefar to us, which without the maps or charts drawn up by other hands, has been a most safe direction to us. No; books and fystems have been in a manner quite unserviceable, because our guide has led us out of all the common paths and beaten tracts of others, whether they be a priori, or a posteriori authors. deed we have confulted them, and taken the best direction from them we could; but any may see they have gone but a little way with us, and therefore been of little fervice to us, in the most difficult part of our road. Even as to the moral perfections of God, where we stood in the most need of their assistance, we could meet with but little. And as to his natural perfections; the arguments of the posteriori authors from this mundane system, and those of the writers of the other class, which fill up scores of pages, and almost whole volumes, taken from space, duration, and

and necessity of nature, have afforded us no aid, but been as the slender reed in the lame man's hand: those two idols of English authors, as some foreigners stile space and duration, have had no homage from us: we have been content, and still are so, with that one plain and obvious principle, that it is only power and will that can be a cause; and hope, that by the help of it, we have at least done considerable service to the active part of mankind, upon this argument.-But let none conclude, because we have been obliged to make much use of this medium, that therefore we pour contempt upon the labours of others: far from it; we esteem and honour the memory of some now dead, and the character and performances of fome now living; and presume, that those if alive would not, and these now living will not take offence at our leaving their path, and firiking out into another, which perhaps they did not cast their eyes upon. Impartial lovers of, and enquirers after theological and divine truth especially, cannot take it amiss by what method of enquiry soever it is found out; on the contrary, they will congratulate the discovery, whoever be the discoverer, or whatever his methods are which he makes use of. To imagine they are for monopolizing it to themselves, and would conceal the inestimable treasure, when they have found it, after all their fearching, re-fearching, and all their close

close and repeated meditations, would be doing them a very great injury: their temper is the reverse, not tenacious and selfish, but generous and communicative, and next to the pleasure of finding out truth, is that they feel in communicating it to others: they defire not to ingross the light and genial warmth of the fun to themselves, but would gladly give eyes to the blind, that they also might see and feel his chearing beams, were it in their power: in like manner, they defire and labour to spread moral light, and open those eyes that are voluntarily clos'd. If then our plain principle of power and will be as ferviceable, in this argument, as we suppose, instead of incurring their displeasure for the use we have made of it, they will congratulate us upon this little discovery, and join their best wishes with our own, that it may not fail our expectations of good effects from it.

Remember then, Eusebius, this principle; and employ it, as I have shewn you, in your coolest, calmest meditations upon the great and supreme object of all understanding and affection: you have seen it has been of service not only in the proof of the natural, but of the moral persections of God, when I was searching into the ground or soundation of

Euseb. Now I perceive you are nigh concluding the kind service you have done me; as compliments amongst intimate cordial

K friends

friends are needless, I shall omit them, especially as I know your temper fo well. The most acceptable and substantial requital in my power is to follow your advice, and imitate, as well as I am able, the method you have used upon this argument. Your principle you mention, I observ'd all along was of much use; and it is what you call it, a plain principle. To understand necessity absolute, antecedent, independent, as the ground or foundation of the existence of some one eternal and independent being, fo frequently mention'd, and so much infifted upon by even our best metaphysical writers that I am acquainted with; is after all very difficult to any common capacity like mine especially: and I am fatisfied it appears unintelligible to many learned men too, and is the reason why even they can make nothing of the argument a priori, as it is commonly manag'd. I think existing independent of any cause, or of all power and will; answers all the purposes of demonstration as well, and as sufficiently as necessity of nature and existence; and surely is much more easy and intelligible. For which reason I thank you, that you have dropt the argument from absolute necessity of nature almost intirely, and have substituted this in its room, taken from not depending upon any will and power. Thus you have done service to the argument a priori, by advancing a new and more clear method of handling

handling an argument good in itself, but manag'd differently by others before you. And therefore very unreasonable indeed it would be in any, should they out of veneration for great names be offended, that you have fet afide an obscure principle, to make room for a plainer, and one as good every whit. By your principle the demonstration has been carried on with much ease and clearness: and certainly it is a great advantage to any fet of arguments, to be founded upon a clear, very intelligible, and frong principle; as it must be the contrary, to proceed upon a principle weak and doubtful, or dark and mysterious. Indeed your's perhaps is but the other principle express'd, and set in another light; yet the idea of absolute antecedent necessity cannot be so commodiously explain'd, and confequently cannot fo eafily make its way unto the understanding. From your method, I perceive the argument a priori not to be a mere metaphyfical whim, but a strong and conclusive argument; and not only so, but also a manner of reasoning very useful, and of great confequence: I should be glad therefore, if you would at some convenient opportunity favour me with more of it; and also that according to promife, you would shew us the proper and best use we can make of this great and important subject, the being and perfections of God, And fince I have often interrupted you in your preceding ar-K 2 guing, An Explication of the PARTI.

guing, and broke the chain of reasoning, a compendious and uninterrupted view all at once of this argument from first to last would be very acceptable. May I expect this favour from you?

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THEOPH. I do not know any thing to the contrary, but you may. And with regard to my promise which you mention, I have not forgot it, and hope not to fail of making my word good. But at present, let us part, and if you be dispos'd, recollect and re-consider what has been offer'd already; and may the advantage from it to you be as great as your expectations and my wishes. Farewel.



# PART II.

Being a compendious Synopsis of the argument a priori, concerning the being and perfections of God.

#### SECT. I. DEFINITIONS.

DEFINIT. I. God is an uncaused, eternal, infinite, and all-perfect being.

Ndeed of this term God another Defini-I tion is generally given, taken not from the nature and perfections of the first cause, but from his dominion; by feveral, particularly by Sir Isaac Newton. But then this is a definition of God, not in his absolute, but his relative capacity or character; relatively, and as confider'd by the religionist, God is the perfect monarch of the universe: but consider'd abitractly or metaphyfically, he is a being uncaused, eternal and absolutely perfect. True, our knowledge of him is very K 3

find him out unto perfection, by our most diligent and impartial fearches: yet this definition of him is right as far as it goes. Befides, as we are to prove his existence and attributes, it must be of absolute necessity to have a right notion of him in general, and consequently to shew in a definition what he is, before we go about to prove that he is: yet it is very common for writers upon this argument to take quite the other method, viz. of proving that there is a God before they explain or define the meaning of the terms: nay, perhaps they do not this, several of them, from beginning to the end of a performance: a method in no wife just, and carefully shunn'd by all exact reasoners, elpecially the mathematicians, who first constantly explain to us such and such figures, in their definitions, before they begin to demonstrate at all. Let us then observe and remember, that God is a being produc'd by no will and power, and therefore is eternal and all perfect.

DEFINIT. II. The Existence of God is the actual being of the first Cause.

It is the being, and not the metaphylical substance of this cause, which is the subject of our enquiry. As there is a difference beeween substance and existence, between the former

former and latter idea; it is this that we are to confider and demonstrate, and not his efsence or substance, inasmuch as this is far above our comprehension: and no wonder, as he is an infinite being, and we are finite, creatures of very narrow capacities too; fo imperfect, that it is not possible for us to form an idea of any thing, not even of a straw or pile of grass, when divested of its properties; nor to answer many questions relating to these things: fome things, nay every thing is above our comprehension; but to infer, because we know not every thing, therefore we know nothing, is very wrong, just as if one should fay, because a drop is not equal to an ocean, it is therefore not even a drop itself. Thus there are some who pretend, because we know not every thing relating to a subject, therefore we can know nothing, as Cotta in Cicero argues against the existence of God, and the antient Pyrrhonists against all existence whatever.

DEFINIT. III. The Existence of God is self-existence, or rather existing without any cause independently.

This is the import of self-existence; for this expression cannot mean, that God produe'd himself, which is as impossible to him, as it is for the meanest insect, or any portion of matter, to make itself, all beings material or immaterial being just the same before existence, or no cause being as unable to produce a small effect as a greater. Wherefore, the existence of God usually stil'd felf-existence, must be uncaused and independent existence. Yet it cannot be groundless existence, fince of all existence there is and must be some ground or reason, otherwise there might have been no existence: but this was impossible, fince there is actual existence. Now the reason or ground of existence mult either be will and power, or else absolute neceffity, antecedent, in the order of nature, to and independent upon all will and power: but will and power could not be the reason of God's existence, as he is the first cause, or the first will and power, and there could not be will and power prior to the first will and power: therefore necessity absolute and independent must be the reason of his existence, and the only reason. To ask what must be the ground of this necessity, would be vain and impertinent curiofity.

DEFINIT. IV. The attributes of God are either natural, or independent of all will and power, or moral and voluntary.

The divine natural and necessary attributes are, like his exittence and substance, independent of all will and power, and are the properties of his metaphyfical substance; as abiolnie

SECT. I.

absolute eternity, infinity, simplicity, incorruptibility, unity, omnipotence, and omniscience: his moral attributes are the properties of his will; as goodness, veracity, righteourness, and every other perfect moral temper becoming the Deity. Now to know what his attributes of either kind are in themselves, we may attain this by reflecting upon ourfelves, and confidering what this or that natural power or moral temper is in us; for what any natural or moral power is in us, the same it is in God, as to the nature, tho' not as to the degree of it; for instance, knowledge in God and us must be of the same general nature, and can differ only in degree; thus it is with every other attribute of his, whether natural or moral, that are communicable; the difference is, not effential but gradual; which is carefully to be observ'd, inasmuch as there are some philosophers, as the Atheistic Epicureans, and even some divines, that would perfuade us, that we know nothing of the divine perfections, because they are not fimilar to our own. For from hence it will follow, that we can fee no reafon, and can be under no obligation, to fear, love, honour, obey, and imitate God, fince divine fear, love, honour, obedience, and imitation, are evidently founded upon our knowledge of his perfections. Consequently, unless we take away the ground of all religion, his perfections must differ from our's, not in kind, but in degree.

DEFINIT. V. A Demonstration of the Being and attributes of God a priori, is proving them from his nature or primary qualities.

In general, demonstration is a chain of arguments depending upon one another, founded originally upon principles felf-evident, and terminating at last in a necessary conclusion: and in particular, demonstration a priori is proving an effect from the cause, either proximate or remote; or proving a conclution by fomething previous, whether it be a caufe, or only an antecedent. Wherefore the argument a priori cannot take place, till we have prov'd a posteriori, that there is something previous, even eternal and independent. The proof a posteriori is just the contrary, like tracing a fountain by its streams. Therefore, if by the term God be meant only an uncaused, eternal, independent substance, it would be improper to call any proof of fuch a being an argument a priori. And it should feem not speaking with propriety and accuracy, to call the common argument a prieri a proof of the existence, as well as of the attributes of God, fince what proves his existence is the argument a posteriori. Therefore it would be more proper, to call the argument a priori concerning the being and attributes

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butes of God, only a demonstration of the attributes of God a priori, and not a demonstration of his being, as well as of his attributes; fince it is not a proof of his being, but of his attributes. However, tho' this is the nature of the argument, no bad consequence follows from using the common title of it.



SECT.

## SECT. II.

# Metaphyfical Data or Axioms.

Here is fomething now existing. II. Whatever is, is either caused or uncaused.

III. What is caused is not of itself: or no being can be cause and effect.

IV. What is of itself is not caused.

V. There is no real cause without power and will.

VI. Every cause is at least equal to its effects, in all real excellency.

VII. There is no effect without a proper or sufficient cause.

VIII. Every cause is both when and where it acts.

IX. The nature of a cause may be understood by its effects.

X. Of nothing there are neither attributes nor effects.

### SECT. III.

A Demonstration of the Being of God a posteriori, and of his attributes a priori.

#### PROPOSITIONS.

PROP. I. Something now is.

iom: yet it is not amis to make it our first Proposition in order to the proof of the being and attributes of God: for it is well known, that data are frequently demonstrated, at least illustrated by mathematicians. Not that we pretend to demonstrate, strictly speaking, this Proposition concerning our own existence, or things around us. However, our own existence we know by self-consciousness, which is proof sufficient; and indeed our own existence we perceive so plainly, that other

other proof is needless (1). Should there be any doubt with me about the existence of other things, yet there can be no doubt about my own, because doubting about the reality of other things is a plain proof of my own, fince were I not, I could not doubt at all. Therefore that metaphyfical principle laid down by the French philosopher as the foundation of all reasoning, was most certain, wiz. I think, therefore I am; for the connexion between thinking and existence is neceffary. As to the existence of other things about us; tho' there be not a necessary connexion between our existence and their's, but only betwixt our's and the existence of the first cause: yet our receiving ideas from without is a sufficient argument of the existence of things around us; because the ideas of them are inevitable, as our idea of the fon when thining, for instance, which we both fee and feel. Therefore let any one who doubts of the existence of any thing but himself, not only look at, but feel the fire before him; and there's no doubt, but ocular and fenfible demonstration will remove his feruples about its real existence. It is possible indeed, that things may not exist around us, which are the objects of our fight, touch,

<sup>(1)</sup> Quid ergo nos sumus? Quid ista quæ nos circumstant, alunt, sustinent? Tota rerum natura umbra est, aut inans aut fallax. Non facile dixerim, utrum magis irascar illis qui nos nihil scire voluerunt, an illis qui ne hoc quidem nobis reliquerunt, nihil scire. Senec.

and other senses: yet this possibility should be of no weight against all the evidence that there is of their actual existence.

PROP. II. Of the existence of every thing that exists there must be some reason.

Which reason can only be either will and power, or necessity of nature: every being must be caused, or uncaused: every being that is produced, must be caused by the will and power of some other being, there being no other possible cause of any substance, but will and power. And since there is, as we shall soon prove, one being that is not the production of any will and power; the reason or ground of his existence must be necessity of nature, otherwise his existence will be without any reason, which is impossible, with reference to even the existence of a mote or mite.

PROP. III. The mundane fystem of beings is not uncaused and independent (m).

For it is not a contradiction, to suppose that once it did not, and that hereafter it may

<sup>(</sup>m) It is a little surprising to see men frequently contending about the origin of their families; and yet but sew give themselves the trouble once seriously to enquire how the whole race at first came into being, whether it sprung from the earth, or dropt from the clouds; when it began, or if there

not exist; since this supposition does not reduce us to that plain absurdity, that there may be an effect without a cause. Besides, whatever we confider relating to it, whether it's form, matter, motion, or disposition of it's parts; it always appears to be the effect of fome will and power: the form of it is not necessary, because always changing; nor is the motion of it so, because upon this supposition it could not have a beginning, nor could it be put out of its necessary direction into any other, nor could it ever cease: but these conclusions from the necessary motion of matter, are directly contrary to its vis inertia, or capacity of being mov'd, than which nothing is more plain and demonstrable in physicks.

Even the most excellent beings in our system, our fouls, are far from being uncaused and independent substances, whatever their nature is, tho' that be immaterial. And we might as reasonably imagine ourselves to be omnipotent, omniscient, or omni-present, as

uncaused

was a time when it was not; tho' these enquiries are far more worthy any wife man's pains than those infignificant contells. We are eafily fatisfy'd we and our immediate parents have not been for ever; but few go further: we take this world as we find it, without confidering who made it, or whether it was made or not. None can well bear to have their ancestors at fronted, nor their pedigree despised; and yet many now-a-days don't scruple to own themselves the children of the earth, or the offspring of blind fate and chance. Whatever others may do, I shall not think my pains ill bestow'd, in examining once in life, as far as my poor abilities will carry me, how this present state of things came at first to be. Dr. Cheyne's Philosoph. Princip. of Relig. p. 111, 112.

uncaused or self-existent. In our seminal or embryo-state, the foul acts but as a principle of vegetation; in the state next to that, it ferves but as a fenfitive principle; and in our after stages of existence at present, even in our state of maturity and manhood, it exerts itfelf with much labour and difficulty, with many unwelcome interruptions and imperfections. Can this be an uncaused, independent substance? Surely it cannot, fince it is unavoidably subject to many alterations, limitations, incapacities, imperfections, and painful fenfations; all which make it wish, that it could fink at pleasure into a torpid and inactive state, and then emerge into one of activity and delightful vigorous enjoyment.

PROP. IV. An eternal feries and fucceffion of merely dependent beings alone, without any cause, is a contradiction.

The present visible system, as we have prov'd, being both a collection of real beings and dependent beings too; must owe its existence originally and ultimately to an uncaused and independent cause. A series of uncaused, and yet of dependent beings, without an extrinsic cause, is a concatenation of causes and effects, without a cause; of antecedents and consequents, without any thing to join them, which any one may see is a contradiction: it is a series of beings, without

any cause extrinsic or intrinsic; and therefore either they must be no real beings, or they must have some other cause than themselves. This fystem therefore is the effect of an uncaused cause.

In thort, fomething now is; therefore fomething always was: a conclusion fo plain and undeniable, that even all Atheists are forc'd to grant it; only they would make us believe, this eternal fomething was nothing else but mere matter, existing in little particles or atoms; but we can demonstrate not only an eternal formething, but also that this is of a nature infinitely superior to any atoms, tho' supposed eternal.

PROP. V. The first original cause of all things is independent.

When we reflect upon the nature of a first or underived being, the first thing that occurs to our thoughts concerning it's existence is, that it owes it to no other being, not even to itself; for then it would be both cause and effect (n), or it would exist and not exist at the same time, which is impossible. It must therefore be independent entirely and absolutely: or there is no possible cause, no power or will, not even its own

pridi via Siodaw. (n) For, as Aristotle observes, it is utterly absurd and impossible, that any thing should be the cause of itself; as it is, that any thing first should be both prior and posterior to itself, and that any thing excellent should both excel and be excelled.

power and will, concern'd in the support of its existence, or can any ways affect it. His existence is like that of truth, unalterable, and not to be affected by any power or will. Suppose a being once existing independent of will and power, and you will be convinc'd, it must always be independent; for surely as no being did contribute to its existence, much less can any contribute to the support and continuance of the existence of the first cause. See here and admire this glory, this unrivall'd and incommunicable glory of the Deity, absolute independence of existence, invariable to all eternity.

PROP. VI. The first and independent being is also a necessary being.

All beings must have a reason of their existence: but of the being of God there is, and can be no reason but absolute necessity of nature. Perhaps there is no material difference between this proposition and the last, between independent and necessary existence, or that existence which is owing to no will and power, and that which is founded in neceffity of nature. But as learned men have for a long time stil'd God a necessarily existent being, the former proposition may serve as an explication of this, which immediately follows it; and this may not be quite useless, tho' supposed to be but coincident with the laft. L 2

last, since this throws light upon the other, and that renders this more intelligible, which probably has frequently been used without any clear and determinate ideas being affixed to the terms necessity of nature. To speak out plainly; this phrase has been used by many metaphysicians, like the Peripatetic philosopher's occult qualities.

PROP. VII. The first independent cause is immutable and incorruptible.

So close and inseparable is the connexion between independence and immutability of existence, that whatever being has either attribute, must have both; whatever is independent is immutable, and whatever is immutable must be independent. There is no possible separation of these two properties, Take an illustration of this: space is independent, and it is immutable, by any possible addition, or subtraction, or alteration whatever: you cannot even in thought add or diminish, or any ways change it. As unchangeable, or more fo, if possible, is God, fince space is a property of his existence: and you cannot, even in idea, produce any change in his existence: as you cannot conceive space more or less, or in any respect otherwise than it is; so you cannot possibly conceive the existence of God sooner or later, or in any refpect chang'd from what it is, has been, and rouft be. And what can the reason of this he?

be? Some reason of this there must be, and this can be only his existing independently of any cause; and it is only a cause which can alter existence, or produce this effect, which requires a previous cause as much as any effect that you can name. As corruptibility is a particular alteration of existence, and all changes are incompatible to the existence of God; it would be waste of time to prove that he is infinitely remov'd from it in particular.

PROP. VIII. The first, independent, and immutable cause, is eternal \*.

This proposition is a plain and necessary conclusion from the last, For as the first cause is immutable absolutely, he must necessarily be eternal: as he is liable to no possible change, being independent upon all will and power, he cannot be liable to that which is the greatest change, viz. annihilation, or non-existence. No cause can possibly affect him in the least degree, much less can any affect him in the greatest possible degree; not himself, much less any dependent or secondary cause.

Observe here, that eternity is consequent from independency and immutability; absolute eternity past and future: but independency and immutability are not consequent upon eternity, or eternity does not infer

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Partes æternæ illius durationis ita connexæ sunt, ut nullo modo a se divelli possint, contrà quàm in creaturis, quæ initium habuerunt, usu venit. Non sequitur ex eo quod hodie sumus, eras suturos; sed semel posità naturæ sine initio ex sistentia, necesse est eam sine sine perseverare.

independence and immutability, as an infinite line does not infer an infinite superficies, and an infinite superficies does not infer a body infinite in all dimensions: an infinite line or superficies are both possible, without the other infinite dimension: but an infinite depth is not possible, without an infinite superficies; nor an infinite superficies, without an infinite line. One use of this remark, amongst others, is, that hence it follows, tho' we grant the Atheists the eternity of their atoms; yet they must not therefore be independent and immutable, and consequently the first independent immutable cause: and this observation may in like manner be applied to any other supposed, and even real, eternal being, befides the first independent one. This cause may act and produce eternally, but cannot also produce independent, as well as eternal beings, because those eternal beings must depend upon his will. Nothing can be clearer than this, that even the eternal and independent being cannot produce another independent being; but he may produce an eternal being. Cannot he create or produce to eternity? In like manner, he may have created from eternity, this being as easy to be conceived as that: but future eternal production none, it is prefum'd, will deny; neither should a past eternal production be denied, for this further reason, because of eternal will and power there may be eternal volition and exertion, otherwise you must suppose them not to be eternal.

eternal. An eternal will, eternal volition, eternal production follow one another directly in possibility, tho' not in act or effect. To fay volition must precede production, is faying nothing, because with the first independent cause they are one and the same idea; therefore it would be afferting, that I is 2, and that one and the same thing must be before itself. Therefore, an eternal production must be possible; and it is probable too, fince an eternal will scarce can be conceived, without eternal volition, and eternal volition may be eternal production. To deny this would be to refult and gainfay clear demonfiration, which cannot fail to convince, unless it be, because it has not been consider'd and apprehended.

PROP. IX. The first independent, immutable, eternal being is infinite or immense.

In the order of nature, this attribute follows next after the preceding ones; and is a necessary consequent from his absolute independence. For any being to settle the limits or extent of its existence, is the very same thing as to give itself existence, which is impossible. Could a man in being make any addition of substance to himself, that addition of substance would be a self-production; in other words, a contradiction. Limitation of existence is a positive effect, and must be owing therefore to a real possible cause: but God is independent upon all causes, therefore

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cannot be limited in his existence by any, and therefore must be unlimited or immense, Why is our globe here, and not elsewhere? Why does it exist within its present limits, and is not extended as far as the body of Saturn, or as the fun is? Is it not because its extent or compais of space is affign'd to it, by the agency of some other being? But no agency can affect an independent being, not even his own, much less any other's. Wherefore his existence cannot be limited. You may take this other demonstration of the divine immensity, if you chuse it. The necesfity of nature by which God exists, being absolute and independent, is every where uniformly the same; he therefore who exitts by necessity of nature, must be also uniformly the same every where, otherwise he will exist necessarily no where: for a being that may be supposed, without a contradiction, to exist out of any one part of space, may be supposed to exist out of all parts of it; and manifeftly is necessarily existent no where: that is, he is a necessarily existent being, and not a necessary existent being, which is a contradiction. Therefore he who exists necessarily any where, exists necessarily every where, or is omnipresent and infinite. You may illustrate this arguing, from the existence of truth: this is the same every where, in our world, and in the planetary worlds; nay, even in the highest regions, or the remotest heavens. Thus is the divine substance

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uniformly the same in all portions of space; infinitely (0) expanded, whose unpartable constituents, like those of space, are so closely connected, that the whole infinite substance is as much one individually, or numerically, as any one being in nature.

It is impossible indeed for us to measure infinity in our thoughts; but yet we can demonstrate that God is infinite, as we are able to demonstrate the real existence of many things, whose modus's we cannot explain.

Add to what has been offer'd upon this head, that we may argue the immensity of God ex absurdo; thus, were he not infinite, there would be infinite parts of space in which the power and other perfections of God could never be exerted: which appears derogatory to a being of all perfection.

COROLLARY. This mundane system is not, and cannot be the first cause. For whatever is limited in its existence, or mov'd in any direction, inasmuch as limitation of existence, or direction of motion, either of them is an effect owing, as we have shewn, to an extrinsic cause, must therefore be produc'd: but this is the very case with as much of the universe as we are acquainted with: it must therefore be produc'd and dependent.

PROP.

(a) The very learned Dr. Cudeworth feems to have been at least in doubt concerning the infinite expansion of the Deity;

however, he dropt this remarkable passage concerning it:
"It must be acknowledged that the hypothesis of an extended or expanded Deity may be very useful and serviceable to retain some in theism, who can by no means admit of a Deity, or any thing else unextended." Intellect. Syst. p. 833.

Prop. X. The independent, immutable, e. ternal, and immense being is perfectly spiritual: or his substance is of that nature, that it penetrates all other substances, material or immaterial, existing as well where they are, as where they are not; and is absolutely indivisible, simple, uncompounded.

This proposition is consequent from the last concerning the immensity of God. For as he is every where, he must necessarily penetrate all substances besides himself, let their natures be ever so various and different, otherwife he would not be every where, but only like matter, for instance, existing where there is no other body. This proposition too is consequent from that concerning the independence of his existence. For could any substance of any kind exclude the divine substance, the substance of God, which is absolutely independent, would depend upon that other excluding substance, as to the portion of space where it is to exist; but this amounts to a contradiction. He cannot be absolutely independent upon all causes, and yet depend even upon every clod of earth or pebble, as to the place where he is to exist.

Again; we may argue his fpirituality, as abfurdo: thus, he is immense; and as he is immense, wherever he is, there is his efficient pow-

er; consequently wherever he is, he can produce other beings, as we shall soon shew; and consequently, an immense creation is possible; and therefore, unless he penetrate all substances, he may exclude himself quite out of the universe; that is, out of all space, and therefore out of being. Which is repugnant

to his eternity.

Further; the latter part of the notion of the divine spirituality, that God is a being absolutely indivisible, simple, and uncompounded, appears clearly from his absolute independency upon all will and power; for division, composition, commixtion, &c. are all positive effects of will and power; and therefore cannot have any place in him, who is independent on all will and power.-You may argue likewise his simple, indivisible, uncompounded nature from his omniprefence: thus, an infinitely expanded substance is unmoveable; and therefore indivisible, simple and uncompounded; because there can be no division, but by a separation of the parts; and no separation of parts without motion, without changing the fituation, as well as the figure of the parts of the divided substance. But the infinite substance of God can no more move than be moved, fince it fills and exhausts all space, and therefore cannot be divided: like infinite space itself, which cannot admit an ideal division any more than ideal subtraction, addition, or multiplication. We

can confider indeed this, or the other portion of space, but this is all.

COROLLARY I. Hence we perceive the floic hypothesis concerning the nature and origin of the foul of man, its being a particle of the divine substance emitted from it, as a sunbeam from the fun, cannot be true. For, according to this pneumatic hypothesis, the formation and existence of every human soul requires actual division and diminution of the divine substance: but this substance is absolutely incapable of division, motion, and diminution; and therefore cannot be form'd, by separation of parts, into human, spiritual substances. This stoic pneumatic tenet is also repugnant to the eternity of God. For if he can form other substances out of his own, he may exhaust or confume his substance by one formation after another, and thus cease to exist at all, unless in particles emitted; as the body of the fun may, by emitting particles from itself, be diminish'd into no sun; or a mountain, by continual crumbling and falling, may come to nothing. Once more; this supposition before us is inconsistent with the independency of the divine existence and substance. It is indpendent upon even the will of God himself, and therefore cannot be divided and feparated by himself. It is contrary, finally, to his immutability: he is unchangeable, and therefore cannot alter his substance at any time,

SECT. III. Argument a Priori. 157 time, by raising human spirits out of himself into existence.

COROLLARY II. Again; from hence it appears, that the philosophy of Spinoza concerning the universe, is absolutely false. According to this Atheistic philosopher, the whole universe is but one substance; and according to this grand principle, the basis of his scheme. there can be but one substance, because one substance cannot produce another: but both are evidently false, the principle and the scheme sounded upon it. For the universe, granting it to be but one fubstance, is movable, figur'd, divisible, and discerpible; and therefore is not God, as he would have it to be; because God is a being, whose substance is spiritual, indiscerpible, and immoveable; there is the greatest difference between the one and the other, and therefore the one cannot be the other, any more than light can be darkness, or motion can be rest. His grand principle too is false, as we shall soon shew. fince one substance, as will appear presently, can produce another; a being, fuch as God, can produce not only one, but any number of substances, and of very different natures and properties. And indeed substance can only perhaps produce substances, with their respective attributes and properties of motion, rest, and others, which need not be particularly mention'd.

PROP. XI. The independent, immutable, eternal, immense and spiritual being, the uncaused cause, is but only one.

This attribute, the unity, the real, effential unity (p) of God, is of the greatest importance, tho' but little account feems to have been made of it, by Polytheists of old, and others lately: it is the basis of virtue, peace, religion, and divine worship; all which must necessarily be in a ruinous and sad condition, if their foundation be undermin'd by Polytheistic notions and schemes. Let us then use our best endavours to secure the foundation. that the super-structure, so fine and entertaining, may also be safe.

True, infinite space is on my right hand, and the same on my left; but yet there is but one proper, compleat, infinite expansion: and there is in like manner eternity palt, and the same to come; but still, properly speaking, one eternity; because each of them is bounded by the present moment; as the two

infinite

(p) It must be the very foulest of all mistakes, either not to know God by Atheism, or to detract from him by Polytheifm. Therefore the belief of the being of God is the first article of natural religion, and the belief of his unity is the next in place and weight. P. Nye, p. 39.

It is not probable, if there were more Gods then one, that they would give us no intimation of it, either in the works of creation, or providence, that we might not omit to pay them that equal veneration, which their benefits to us, and the ex-

cellence of their natures require. Ibid. p. 40.

infinite spaces; one to the right, and the other to the left, are limited by the space we exist in. But who dreamt of two infinite spaces, absolutely and compleatly infinite; or of two eternities absolute and compleat? Eternity past or future is but a partial imperfect eternity, and so is infinite space before or behind us, otherwise you may suppose an indefinite number of infinite spaces, one on this hand, another on that, and fo on without end; for if matter be divisible in infinitum, so must infinite space, upon supposition that it may be divided into two, or any other number. It is all but one whole, confider it as you please: and so is eternal duration but one whole.

There is, and can be but one immense space; therefore there is, and can be, but one first cause, whose existence is commensurate to the immensity of space. We have but even now shewn, that there is but one space absolute and perfect; and there can be but one: confequently there can be but one immense being. Indeed of limited beings there may be even but one of a fort, as but one fun; but then there may possibly be more than one: but an unlimited immense being can be but one. For as two bodies cannot exist under exactly the very same dimensions, or in one and the same place, for then they could not be two, but one; as suppose two cylinders penetrating each other, and co-inciding

ciding perfectly, is making two cylinders of only one: and as two human fouls cannot exist in one and the same place, and penetrate each other; but they must be one, as well as the place of their existence is but one: and apply the fame supposition to any other two beings in the universe, specifically the fame, and it will hold good, that they will be but one. So suppose there are two divine substances specifically the same, and existing in one immensity, penetrating each other; they will be as much but one and the fame substance in that one immensity, as two cylinders supposed penetrating one another, and existing in one and the same place, are but one cylinder in reality.

Some argue the divine unity from immenfity, after this manner. Suppose two first causes independent of each other, these two contradictions will follow, that space is an elfential property of them both, and that they depend upon one another. For suppose F to be one, S the other, and I to be space. It is plain that F cannot exist without I, nor I without F, because F is the substance and I the effential property: S also cannot exilt without I, nor I without S, for the fame reafon. As therefore F depends upon I, and I upon S, F must depend upon S: and again, S depends on I, and I upon F; therefore s must depend upon F. So that two first causes in one immensity would be two independent

pendent and dependent beings, which is a contradiction.

Some argue still further from immensity, that the first cause is, and can be but one, thus; for immensity being a property (say they) of this being, and no property being able to exist, but with its substance; therefore the substance to which immensity belongs,

is infinite, and therefore but one.

You may deduce the divine unity from omnipotence, an attribute which, as we shall soon shew, belongs to the first cause. For omnipotence is one, and can be but one; for the supposition of two omnipotent beings, shews that they can have no power over one another, and consequently that they have not all power; and therefore that they are omnipotent and not omnipotent, which is a contradiction. Two omnipotent beings therefore are impossible; but there is one omnipotent being, and there can be but one, as two are impossible, as much so as two immensities.

And to make this appear evident to every one, let us confider each of the following hy-

potheses.

If Hypothesis. That there is a plurality of sirst independent principles, two or sour, or what number you please, co-equal, co-essential, co-eternal, co-perfect, co-wise, co-good, and perfectly alike in every respect. True, were there ever so many such principles supposed, were there two thousand instead of two, they

would perfectly harmonize with one another, and their government of the world would be without the least clashing; for perfect reafon, wisdom, virtue, and goodness, would co-incide and agree, as if subjected only in one Virtue therefore, and religion, fo principle. far as dependent upon their declarations, would be the same as if one only first allperfect principle be suppos'd; yet, as reason alone teaches us there is one fuch principle, and no more, we should upon this first hypothefis, be uneafy left our religion did not take in the whole number or order of such beings, and on this account should be in doubt whether we pay due honour to all the beings who might claim it: a very uneafy painful confequence from a plurality of felfexistent and all-perfect principles, quite destructive of the peace of our minds.

2<sup>d</sup> Hypothesis. Let us suppose, with some of the antients, a plurality of self-existent principles, but directly contrary to one another as light and darkness, good and evil. And what will follow hence? This would be the consequence, that nothing could be produc'd, but they would keep one another perpetually at bay, or oppose another; thus from an equality between action and re-action, two opposite forces, the result is rest. As, therefore, there are effects produc'd, there are

But,

no fuch principles.

But, 3<sup>d</sup> Hypothesis. Granting that true which we have indeed demonstrated, the absolute perfect unity of a first independent
principle; then the supposition of a plurality
is attended with these bad consequences.

1. All of them, besides the only real independent principle, are non-entities, so far as

supposed to be independent principles.

2. All supreme religious homage offer'd to

them is paid to non-entities.

3. The one true God is despoil'd of that radical perfection, and peculiar prerogative, of being the only independent principle.

4. The other supposed independent principles, if virtuous and acquainted with the homage offer'd them, must be displeased and affronted, to observe the true God dishonour'd, and themselves set on an equality with him.

5. This Polytheism mixes error and vain imaginations with devotion, introduces into religion very wrong and confused sentiments, greatly perplexes and obscures its doctrines, and consequently weakens their authority, and

exposes them to cavils and contempt.

6. It leads to us fet religious knowledge and gratitude upon a wrong basis, as it teaches us to ascribe those benefits and schemes of goodness to two or three, which are derived from one only fountain; and to misplace our hopes and dependence, with regard to suture blessings, upon several independent principles, whereas there is one only.

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More

More arguments might be added, to prove the absolute unity of God; but more would be unnecessary, after so many have been urg'd. But two things may be offer'd in excuse hereof; one is, that the preceding arguments have, at least most of them, been little more than hinted, and proposed very briefly: the other is, the great importance of the subject.

PROP. XII. The first, independent, immutable, eternal, immense, spiritual, and only one cause, is persectly intelligent.

The intelligence, as the existence of God, is necessarily first to be prov'd a posteriori; inasmuch as we cannot perceive the connexion between existing independently, and being intelligent. Therefore, as there is now intelligence, there was always intelligence, just as because something now is, something always was. The first cause therefore is an intelligent being. Numerous and glorious are the effects and proofs of his knowledge and wifdom, which every where meet us, in the material, the brutal, the rational, and moral world: the material fuftem is an aftonishing fabrick: the brutal creation, in all its parts, great and small, affords us inimitable mechanism to entertain and astonish us: the rational world is still a more shining demonstration of divine wisdom and contrivance.

But

But yet it must not be conceal'd, that these effects only prove the intelligence of their cause to be equal to them, and not to be infinitely perfect. This is to be prov'd a priori: thus; the first cause is independent of all will and power; therefore his intelligence must be unlimited or infinite, there being no cause to limit it, as there is none to limit him in duration or extent.

Besides, as he is omni-present, he must be omniscient; if intelligent any where, he must be so every where, because he is the fame every where. Which certainly takes away all room for doubting about his perfect knowledge of all things past and present, fince he has been intimately present with the former, and is so with the latter: and could we but admit the scholastic notion of the divine duration, that there is no fucceffion at all in it, but it is a munc stans, as the prefent moment, and all things are to God co-existent, past and future, as well as prefent; there would not be the least room to doubt of his knowledge of them all: but the worst is, it is an absurdity, a most glaring one, as much fo as if you should suppose the divine immensity to be a mere point; it can therefore be of no fervice to us in this cafe, nor indeed in any. Therefore we are to confider, if the divine prescience cannot be accounted for in some better way than this. M 3

Well, there is no doubt concerning the divine prescience of all future, natural, and necessary (9) effects, any more than there is concerning the mechanick's fore-knowledge of the effects of his machine, suppose the motion of a clock, or any fuch plain machinery. All the doubt there can possibly be, must relate to his knowledge of the future conduct of free agents. And with reference to this; we must not, we cannot deny \*, as some do, the existence of free agents, tho' this supposition would indeed clearly account for his fore-knowledge of the conduct of men in particular, because it would be only fore-knowledge of necessary effects of necessary causes, admitting this supposition, that free agency is only a mere fancy. But this supposition must be rejected,

(9) Indeed truly and properly speaking, there are no neceffary effects in the natural world, but they are all contingencies depending on the power and will of God, and his con-Stant agency.

Futura necessario quin Deus cognoscat, dubitari nequit, qui enim, machinam fecit, cujus omnes partes perfecte novil, earumque inter se dispositionem pervidet, is machina effectus certo pervidet, et prædicere potest. Deus autem totius ma chinæ mundi non modo artifex, fed qui constantibus eam se git legibus, etiam moderator est.

. Of the ancient philosophers who have written either profeffedly or incidentally on this subject of moral agency, the chief are these; Plato in his second and third books de repub. & in Gorgia, in Timæo, in Phædro, often elfenhere: Plutarch de fato, Hierocles on Pythag, golden veries and de fato. Maximus Tyrius an aliquid sit in nostra potestate, Platinas lib. 1. Chalcidius's Comment in Timæ. Alexander Aphrodifiensis lib, de fato ad Imperat. Antonin Ammonius He ma in Exposit. Aristot Chrysip, apud A. G. Among the ale derns Mr. Leibnitz, and Dr. S. Clarke, Mr. Jackson, &c.

as well as the last-mention'd one of the schoolmen; because as that is contrary to all common fense, this is contrary to experience, inconfistent with all moral sense, and destructive

of all chearful hope of happiness.

On this supposition, that there is no free agency, all difference between moral good and evil immediately vanishes, and it is all one to do amiss through ignorance, rashness, overfight, terror and amazement, as from mere petulance, arrogance and wilfulness; manflaughter, nay, chance-medley, is as horrid as the most flagitious patricide: on this imagination, God is the cause of all moral evil, and the only cause of it, and the sole transgreffor: this hypothesis destroys the foundation of all religion, of all hopes of future happiness, and of all fears of future punishment; why should tools, tho' intelligent tools, hope for rewards, or dread punishments, fince they are only tools or instruments, not agents, and therefore do nothing wrong, and nothing right, in a moral sense? This fancy introduces strange confusion into the moral world, and turns all topiy turvy in it. Yes; by all means therefore we must account for this branch of divine prescience in some better method, fince God is free, and man is free, and yet all he does is fore-known: not only revelation, but even reason proves it. For you certainly know how your intimate friend will act, in some given circumstances; for instance, M A that

that your wife, virtuous neighbour, the head of a numerous family, will not, while poffess'd of reason, and in most agreeable circumstances, lay violent hands upon himself; you know felf-love, conjugal affection, paternal dearness, and many strong principles and springs of action will be effectual restraints upon him from committing fuicide, tho' there be a natural power of doing it. All the affairs and business of life, all trade and commerce, all civil and focial concerns are carried on, upon the foot of fome degree of forefight, without which nothing could be transacted in the world. And fince the first cause is infinitely superior to us in all perfection; therefore his fore-knowledge must be infinitely superior, in all cases whatever. Take one instance of divine fore-knowledge, as one has been mention'd of your's relating to your friend: it is of the conduct of the first form'd pair in the garden of Eden. It is very reafonable to suppose God foresaw how they would behave; nay, it is not difficult perhaps to account for his fore-knowledge of it after this manner: he certainly knew all the inward emotions of their hearts, they being his own creatures; all their animal appetites, all their focial affections, and every inclination: he was no stranger to the horrid temper of Satan, being every where present; and from that most vile temper did foresee, that he would do his utmost to ruin the new-form'd couple,

as you know from the temper of your friend. that he will do this or that. And as he had a clear knowledge, both of the tempter and the tempted, from hence his fore-knowledge of the issue of the temptation took its rife, as you might foresee how your friend would act, did you foresee such or such a temptation would occur; as suppose to murder not only you and your's, but himself and his. But then there is an infinite difference betwixt the divine knowledge, and your's of things prefent; that is perfect, and must doubtless be fo from his perfect immenfity, or co-existing with all things, as well as other reasons; and therefore there must be as great a difference betwixt his prescience and your's: but an infinitely wide difference betwixt both is not possible, unless his be as perfect as your's is imperfect. After all; suppose we cannot explain how he does foresee all future contingencies, it is no argument at all against his prescience, because our ignorance (r) shews only our own imperfection, but not that there is any in him, but rather the contrary : and of divine prescience there is not only undeniable proof from reason, but from fact, because it may be prov'd he certainly has foretold future contingencies at a great distance of

Alexand. Aphrodif. de fato, p. 120.

<sup>(</sup>r) Ουδε γας μη τω δυναμενώ λυση τενά των Ζηνών Φ λογών κατά της κινησεώς, ηδη κινησιν αναιρετεύν. Ικανώτερα γας η τε πραγματός εναργεία προς συγκαταθεσίν πάσης της δια λογών αναιρεσης αυτό πιθανότητος.

time. In fine, were God ignorant of future contingencies, or of the future conduct of free agents, his knowledge has continually been increasing since the first existence of moral agents, and will be improving during their existence: but this is an hypothesis that is derogatory to him, and therefore not to be admitted. Wherefore, this is a plain, unforc'd conclusion; that the divine knowledge is compleatly perfect, in all respects, as to things past, present, and future. The divine understanding, as it is independent, cannot be improv'd nor limited; and therefore divine knowledge must extend to all things intelligible, as divine power to all things possible: and things impossible are so, because unintelligible; as no understanding can possibly conceive how any felf-evident truth should become a falshood, no power can make it so. Therefore only impossibles can be unintelligibles to God. Here then is a most amiable object of our speculation, the father of lights, infinitely more agreeable to the intellectual fight, than the pleasant light of the sun is to light corporeal. All light is naturally pleafant, much more fo must the great fountain of all light be. And, no doubt, his perfect knowledge must be pleasant to himself, as it is intuitive, and without labour, as well as without imperfection.

PROP. XIII. The first uncaused, independent, immutable, eternal, immense, spiritual, only one, intelligent cause is a perfectly powerful, or free agent (s).

This proposition is a plain consequence of the last. For as an intelligent being, he has a clear knowledge, not only of all necessary truth, but of all possible existence: but there is no possible existence, and consequently no knowledge of it, but upon supposition of actual power, fince possible existence is possible to fomething, and not to nothing, or to power, not to no power. Suppose no power existing, and you must suppose existence impossible. This proposition is a plain consequence also of the last but one concerning the unity of God. As there is but one first uncaused cause, and it is impossible there should be more than one; confequently he is the author of all existence but his own, and has all dependent upon himself alone, as well as derived

<sup>(1)</sup> Dionysius Longinus in Lib. de sublim. cum dixisset de Deo loquentes curare debere, ut eum nobis magnum, fincerum et impermixtum exhibeant; addit, Taurn z Tav Iso aiwi ό Θεσμοθετης, εχό τυχων αυηρ, επειθη την τε Θεε δυναμιν κατα την αξιαν εχωρησε καξεφηνέν, ευθυς εν τη εισδολη γραπεχενετο. γενεωω γη κ εχενετο. Sic egit is etiam qui Judzis leges condidit, vir minime vulgaris ingenii, ut qui Dei potestatem digne et conceperit et elocutus fuerit, st tim in principio legum hæc scribens; dixit, ait, Deus. Quid? Fiat lux: et sacta est. Fiat terra; et sacta est. Dionys. Long. de Sublim. &c.

derived from him; and therefore has all power in the universe.

Further; you may argue his perfect power from his independence. His power must be unlimited, because it is bounded by no power or will. As these alone limit derived beings to a certain determinate number, and to a certain extent of existence, so also to a certain degree of power. And as divine power has always been unlimited, because independent, it must be always the same, eternally incapable of any limitation or dimunition. Therefore as actual divine knowledge, even boundless knowledge, is of easy acquest, being intuitive: fo the exertion of divine power must be perfectly facil, it being nothing but volition.

And a free agent doubtless God is. If there be free agency (t) in the creation, it must

(t) Some men indeed deny that we have free will at all but these need only to examine themselves to be convinc'd of their mistake -- I would gladly know what greater indications of freedom they could wish to have that they now have. -The only indications any one can give of freedom are, doing the contrary, where there are folid reasons for doing fuch a thing; or making an election among many things, when there is no reason to determine to one more than to another; or being able to suspend the effect of natural actions, when without this interpolition they would mechanically operate. Now it is certain we are capable of giving all thefe indications of our freedom. - But no arguments will make a man confels he feels, if he be obstinately resolv'd not to contels it: now liberty is a thing felt, and is only to be found by teflexion on ourselves and our actions; but there is one argument which will have weight with the wifer and better part of mankind; and that is, that without free will, virtue and vice,

be in God, as there can be no effect but from a proper cause. And that there is liberty in our world, we know by experience. There are so many undeniable proofs of it, that the fatalists cannot shew us how there could be greater evidence of it than we now have, even tho' they should suppose the actual existence of it. Free agents indeed determine and act upon motives or moral inducements, but are not determin'd and acted by them as physical causes: nay, suppose we should grant the fatalift, that there is no free agency in the whole creation, and thus destroy virtue and vice, hopes of future rewards, and fears of an after punishment: still God must be a free being, or have a felf-determining power; otherwise the whole creation must be necessarily what it is, which is contrary to all observation and philosophy; for you can suppose both that it might not have been at all, and that it may not be hereafter, or it may be of some other form, very different from what now it is, which is an undeniable proof that it is not necessary.

justice and injustice, are only bare words. Dr. Cheyne's

Philosoph. Prin. of Relig. 140, 141, 142.

Si Chrysippus sato putat omnia moveri et regi, nec declinari transcendique posse agmina sati et volumina: peccata quoque hominum et delicta non sustentada, neque condicenda sunt ipsis voluntatibusque eorum; se necessitati cuidam et instantia qua oritur ex sato; omnium qua sit rerum domina et arbitra, per quam necesse sit seri quicquid suturum est et propterea nocentium panas legibus inique constitutas, si homines ad malescia non sponte veniunt, sed sato trahuntur. Aul Gel. Noct. Att. lib. 6. cap. 2.

necessary, nor the effect of a cause without liberty and choice. The original cause of all things therefore is a most perfectly free agent, or an omnipotent being. But yet this attribute is not hecessarily terrible, as it does not exist but along with perfect intelligence, as has been just shewn, and with perfect goodness, as we are now going to prove.

Prop. XIV. The first uncaused, independent, immutable, eternal, immense, spiritual, only one, omniscient, and omnipotent cause, is a being of all moral perfection, agreeable to his unrivall'd glories and infinite happiness.

As a free agent, he must have some moral character, right or wrong; for intelligence and will constitute a moral agent, or a being who can discern betwixt right and wrong, between truth and falshood, and can act well or otherwise, according to truth, or in contradiction to it. For there is an unmade (u), eternal,

<sup>(</sup>u) That our first ideas of moral good depend not on laws, may plainly appear from our constant enquiries into the justice of the laws themselves, and that not only of human laws, but of the divine. What else can be the meaning of that universal opinion, that the laws of God are just, and holy, and good? Human laws may be called good, because of their conformity to the divine. But to call the laws of the supreme Deity good, or holy, or just, if all goodness, and holiness, and justice, be constituted by laws, or the will of a superior any way revealed, must be insignificant tautology amounting to no more than this, that God wills what he wills. It must then

eternal, and unchangeable rule of right and wrong, call'd the law of nature, a law to all moral agents without exception, it being independent upon all will and power, incapable at first to be enacted by any, and incapable of being dissolved. Truth is no object of will and power, but only of the understanding; but this faculty has no efficient power, but is only a faculty of difcerning it's object, as the eye cannot form it's objects, but only is the organ of vision. Substance can only produce substance, not truth. Consider, and you will perceive there is fome truth independent upon all will whatever; and fince truth univerfally is homogeneal, therefore all truth must be equally independent. It was eternally true, that the divine perfections are amiable, and most excellent, and therefore that God should infinitely value and love himself: it was also eternally true, that to all fensible beings pleasure is preferrable to pain, that every benefactor should be lov'd by his beneficiary, &c. and confequently that there is a fitness and unfitness of things arising from the nature of sensible beings, antecedent to all law and appointment, not only human, but divine. As there is then an eternal, unalterable law of right and wrong, and as God is a moral

then first be supposed that there is something in actions which is apprehended absolutely good. The late ingenious Professor, Mr. Hutchison's enquiry concerning moral good, &c. p. 253,

moral agent, the most perfect in those faculties, which constitute any being a moral agent, it follows, that he must have a moral character of some kind, or that the determination and choice of his will is agreeable or contrary to the eternal law of rectitude. But it cannot be contrary to this law, morally fpeaking, for several reasons. As he is God. his moral character must be good, because it is this chiefly which constitutes a God, and not any natural perfections alone, much less not natural perfections with horrid tempers. It is the divine moral temper which spreads folendor and glory over his natural attributes. and prevents the gloom and horror which the contemplation of these would universally fpread in the whole universe: it is this which chiefly makes him lovely to himfelf, and fupremely amiable to every well-disposed contemplator of him; like the pleafant light, and gentle warmth of the fun, which render it the most agreeable part in the whole mundane system. In a word, it is only moral excellency that is agreeable to moral agents, confider'd as fuch, as harmony is agreeable only to the ear, and beauty to the eye.

And God, as a happy being, must be of a good moral character. This is evident even from experience, which, alas! teaches us vice is painful; therefore it cannot be found with him who, as even Epicurus allows, is the most happy being: consequently, as he is most

happy,

happy, he is also most virtuous. But again, with reference to his happiness; it must arise chiefly from his moral temper; for as he is a moral agent, and the most perfect one, he cannot be ignorant of the rule of right; and he cannot act against it, but he must act against himself, his own peace and happiness, since there is an antecedent sitness and unsitness of things; and from observing, or not observing this rule, arises the pleasure or pain of intelligent beings; as, from the sitness or unsitness of objects to corporeal senses, arises the pleasure or pain of animals.

Finally, you may argue that God is perfectly good in all (x) moral regards, from his natural attributes, and the law of nature conjunctly. Tho' these are not necessarily connected with his moral perfections, yet those are fit mediums for the proof of these. Thus there is an unalterable fitness and unfitness of things, when applied to one another: of this he cannot be ignorant, as being perfectly intelligent: and against this he cannot be influenc'd, being independent and omnipotent: he must therefore always act according to the strictest rules of goodness, justice, truth, and all moral perfection, communicating happiness, dispensing justice, keeping to the rules of truth, and in all possible cases being as remote

<sup>(</sup>κ) Τ΄ γαθου ερώτας μ' οιον ες ι; ακκέ θε, Τεταγμένου, δικαιου, οσιου, ευσεβες, Κράτων εαυτώ, χρησιμών, καλού, δεόμ, &cc. Cleanth, in Clem. Alex.

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mote from unrighteousness as from mistake, His perfections compleatly fit him for most perfect moral conduct: his own honour requires it: and his own happiness makes it in dispensably necessary for him. Wherefore, upon the whole, God is light and truth: righteousness and goodness: love and happiness. This is the God, whom reason discovers, revelation declares, the only one living and true God. May none have any other Gods besides him.



### SECT. IV.

### COROLLARIES

From the preceding Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.

#### GENERAL COROLLARY.

THE proof of the being and perfections of God being so plain, full, various, and strictly demonstrative; it follows, that there is nothing of which we can possibly be more certain, than we may be, that God is. Even our own existence is not more certain than this; for as we are certain that we are, to we are fure, that we could not make ourselves, and that no being can be both cause and effect; and therefore, that there must be a first uncaused being, independent of all beings: that is, God must be. And from the N 2 demondemonstrated nature of God we conclude particularly (y).

## COROLLARY I.

#### Duration is not God.

You may think it trifling to take the least notice of fuch a conclusion as this: it would be so had it not been afferted; but as it has been affirm'd, how can we help denying it? Strange things have been faid of God, more abfurd things of him than any other being: and therefore let it not be a wonder, that we take

(y) Pro Diis habuerunt mundum Stoici et Varro; mentem quæ ex aquis omnia formavit, fine fine et principio, Thales Milefius; stellas et astra Anaximander; aera infinitum Anaximenes; mentem igneam et mundi animam Democritus; animam per universas mundi partes omnemque naturam comeantem atque diffusam, ex qua omnia animalia vitam capiunt, Pythagor. et Virg.; numerum ineffabilem, Lysis et Philolaus; terram, Pherecydes; quatuor elementa, Prodicus; naturam, Straton; divinam necessitatem, Chryfippus; legem naturalem et divinam, Zeno Citticus; orbem qui contigit coelum, quem separno appellat, Parment des; mentem œternam, causam boni in natura, Plato; unam mentem omnium causam, Aristoteles; vim naturalem ac animalem qua omnia reguntur, Speusippus; planetas et lumen cæter flellarum, Xenocrates; lumen non ut in fole et igne eft, sed rationis, quo mytteria occulta sapientibus videntur, Brachmanes; ex atomis concretos et corporeos, humana figura, licet ab hominibus discretos, Epicurus; mentem quandam solutam, liberam, et fegregatam ab omni concretione mortali, omnia sentientem et moventem, Cicero. And. Beyer. Add. p. 151, 152.

take notice of them, and confute them; for the wonder is, that they have been advanc'd. Then let us briefly shew the falshood of this affertion concerning God. Duration, true, is eternal; but this is the most any can make of it. It is only a property, and may be so of one substance as well as another: but God is an infinite fubstance, with infinite and eternal attributes, and therefore cannot be only duration.

#### COROLLARY II.

# Space is not God.

Some make too much of space, others too little. They certainly run into a very great extreme, who would perfuade us it is nothing less than God. It is indeed a property of him, just as duration is: but that is all; it is not a fubstance, and consequently has not the attributes the divine substance has; and therefore is not God (2), any more than duration

<sup>(2)</sup> Deus æternus est et infinitus, omnipotens, et omnisciens, i.e. durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum; omnia regit et omnia cognoscit, quæ fiunt et cognosci possunt. Non est æternitas vel infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio vel spatium, sed durat et adest, durat semper, et adest ubique, et existendo semper et ubique, Aternitatem ac infinitatem conflituit. Cum unaquæque particula

itself. What absurdities are we oblig'd to consute! such, that even the consutation of them is almost a shame to the consuter; what then must it be to the broachers or abetters of them? Again; they make too little of space, who make nothing of it, or only a bare relation of one thing to another. But nothing it cannot be, since of nothing there are no attributes; but of space there are. But as this notion affects not our argument, let them make what they will of space, provided they do not exalt it into a God.

#### COROLLARY III.

# Matter is not God (a).

This has been taken notice of before; but as it is a conclusion of importance, it may not be amiss to revise it. Matter is divisible, even in infinitum, but God is not divisible at all: it is susceptive of various shapes, and endlessly

ticula sit semper, et unumquodque durationis indivisibile momentum ubique, certe rerum omnium sabricator et dominus non erit nunquam nusquam. Omnipræsens est, non per virtutem solam, sed etiam per substantiam: nam virtus sine substantia subsistere non potest. Newtoni Princip. Schol. Gensral. sub sinem.

(a) Nor is nature God, nor an agent, person, or cause, tho' often represented in popular language as such a but it is the art by which God governs the world. Hobbs in Initial Leviath.

endlessly mutable; but God is immutable: matter is inert, or capable only of being acted upon, here in a compact, there in a lax form; but God exists only in one uniform manner at all times and places: once more, matter may not be eternal, but God must; for the Somatifts cannot prove the creation to be, a contradiction, any more than the annihilation of matter. Let them look upon any parcel of matter, a stone, a log, or a clod of earth, and ask themselves, whether it be likely to be a God, or a portion of God.

#### COROLLARY IV.

The universe is not God.

He is absolutely one immutable being: but the universe is not one, but a collection of many beings, and of a short continuance. Surely none can believe in earnest, that every mean, as well as excellent part of the universe, is also part of God; that all the follies and crimes in the world are God's, and his alone, that he does and endures every thing, is cause and effect, active and paffive, believes and difbelieves, wills and nills, loves and hates the fame things at the same time, &c. Yet all this some pretend to believe concerning God, and these not mere, half-thinking fots, and infatuated debauchees;

N 4

but men of learning and philosophy, who pretend they can prove it as plainly, by definitions, axioms, propofitions, scholiums and corollaries, as ever Euclid prov'd any part of his elements. Little do the unlearn'd know what abfurdities there are in books, and fet off with all advantages they are capable of: which is the reason why we take notice of them in these corollaries. The case here is just as it has been under the preceding heads; men run into very opposite extremes concerning the universe: with some it is an ill-contriv'd and bungled performance, capable of being mended almost every where: nothing. is right, either in the creation, or in providence, but especially in the creation: here all is wrong, the æquator and ecliptick are not fet as they should be; the rocky and mountainous parts of the terrestrial globe are amis; nay, every where almost, both in the inanimate and animate creation, some fault or other is found; and, in thort, in our world there is no less than a world of blunders, they pretend: and therefore who can help concluding, fay they, that a world fo ill contriv'd and turn'd out, cannot be the production of an infinitely wife being, but must be the effect of chance, a fortuitous rencounter of atoms. What! Strange! Since chance never erected an house, not even the (b)

<sup>(</sup>b) Cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest. Cic. de Nat. Deor. 1. z.

meanest cottage; fince it never made so much as a clock, nor even a scare-crow; since it never composed a sonnet or an epigram: can any found mind imagine it has form'd our greatest epic poets, Homer, Virgil, and Milton; that it has produc'd our greatest philofophers, orators, and statesmen; and has fram'd universal nature, tho' there appears every where the most exact geometrical adjustment of parts, and the most exquisite contrivance is to be feen, especially in the vegetable and animal world? Let the Epicurean tribe tell their atom-tale ever so often over. it is impossible for us to believe it, and perhaps they themselves know it is all false. For as their atoms are at least indefinitely divisible. their number indefinite, and space indefinite, in which they roam hither and thither; the chance of producing this system must be indefinite; nay, infinite, and if so, then there were infinite odds (c) against the casual production of our world. Besides, chance, what is this wondrous cause? Nothing but a mere name or empty found, no substance, either spiritual or material, nor attribute of substance,

<sup>(1)</sup> If one with 10,000 dice should throw 5000 fifes once or twice, or even a 1000 fifes once and again, we might possibly fay, he did it by chance; but if with an almost infinite number of dice he should always throw the same side in them all, we should certainly conclude, either that he did it by art and contrivance, or that these dice could turn upon no other side. Dr. Cheyne's Philof. Prin. of Rel. p. 221, 222.

stance, and therefore no cause. It is strange to the last degree then, that men, and learned and ingenious men, as Epicurus and Lucretius indeed were, should talk in this high strain of it, and exalt a mere nothing at this rate. Is this philosophy? Just as much as the most delirious talk that was ever heard from any Lazar in Bedlam. This is one extreme con-

cerning the universe.

The other concerning it, is turning this chance-work into a God. Nature is certainly a fystem exquisitely well-contriv'd; and those parts of the creation that are the most blam'd, and call'd the flips and sports of nature, may, however, ferve as fo many spots in the face of Venus, or as the negroe at Cleopatra's elbow. to enhance the beauty of other parts, and fo contribute to the general advantage. All that fault some find in it, is not to be found in things themselves, but is owing to the ignorance of the fault-finders. And they would be very ready to think fo, did they but confider the infinite distance betwixt the great author of the universe and themselves, with regard to all perfection: and to conclude what they do not understand in the book of nature is all right, because that little is so which they do know. As Socrates having read a book of Heraclitus, a great philosopher, but very obscure; and his opinion of it being desir'd, replied, what he understood was

was very rational, and he did not doubt but the rest was so. But yet the creation is not sit for being a God, unless for a Hottentot, or some such Barbarian. The material part is, as has been shewn, very different in every respect from God: and the spiritual cogitative world is a divine production, but not the Deity, who is not subject to the lassitude, interruptions, painful sensations and reslections, that we are all conscious to.—There is another mistake upon this head, which is, that the universe is nothing. But to proceed,

## COROLLARY V.

It is a most palpable falshood, that there is but one substance in the universe.

This is a grand principle of Spinoza's philosophic scheme (d); but a grand mistake. For
we are certain that we are, that God is, and
that he and we are distinct beings or substances. Therefore Spinoza's fundamental
hypothesis is wrong: he might as well have
said,

<sup>(</sup>d) This is the use which the Spinozists have made of the different systems of De Cart, Malebranche, and Dr. Berkeley. With the first, matter and extension are the same; with the second, the objects of our fensations and God are the same; and with the third, nothing and matter are the same. And Spinoza endeavours to reconcile all three by his system of the only substance. Chevalier Ramsay's Travels of Cyrus, p. 187.

faid, that a million is equal to one, as that fubstances, too many for us to number, are but one. Therefore, as he and we are distinct substances, and he is immutable. we are not particles of God: and therefore it is not impossible for substance to produce fubstance.

## COROLLARY VI.

Two infinite principles are impossible.

The Magi and Manichees advanc'd this abfurd tenet, and so have others, tho' not in the manner of these antient sects. One infinite and immutable being there is, and but one; more are impossible for feveral reasons before given. Suppose them to be of what natures you please, opposite with the Magi and their followers; or perfectly similar, with others more modern; or neither opposite nor similar, but different in some respects: any of these suppositions is inconsistent with reason, virtue, and chearful hope of happiness.

#### COROCLARY VII.

Neither chance nor fate is God.

Chance (e) is not either spirit or matter, either substance, or a property of substance; but in reality only a found. The Epicureans did indeed own that God is; but in effect they made him nothing, as they supposed he minded and did nothing, but all was the effect of chance, and therefore that it was God. Fate is just such another imaginary being or cause as chance, being neither spirit nor matter, neither a substance nor a property, but only a word without an idea; however an idea without an ideatum. Yet how much has been afcrib'd to this nothing by many, as the Pythagoreans and Platonists, out of their fondness for the Egyptian and Chaldean philosophy, and all the admirers of aftrology; and the stoics, who bound up the Deity in the chains of fate, and expected the grand

(e) Denique per fortunam nihil aliud intelligo, quam Dei directionem quatenus per caufas externas et inopinatas res hu-

manas dirigit. Spinoza in Tract. Theolog Polit. p. 46.
Riches, authority, friendship or favour, and good fortune; which last is really nothing elfe but the favour of God Almighty. Good fortune, or casual prosperity is honourable, because a sign of the favour of God, to whom is to be asscribed all that cometh to us by fortune, no less than that we attain unto by industry. Hobbs's Hum Nat. p. 45, 46.

grand Platonic year or revolution, and circulation of all things? But it has been demonstrated there is a God, and that he made all things; and as certain is it, that he preserves and governs the universe. For,

### COROLLARY VIII.

God is not excluded out of any portion of fpace.

He exists not in any place, not in heaven itself, so as not to be present in all others; but is intimately present with every being: and therefore he cannot be ignorant of any one thing; and therefore, as he is all-perfect, cannot leave the government of the universe wholly to any substitutes or vicegerents, whe-Where he is, there ther demons or others. are all his boundless perfections, inspecting, permitting, or directing every thing, in it's proper time and order. Hence there can no unforeseen accident or persect contingency happen, nor blind mechanical necessity or inexorable fate exist: but there must be both a God and Providence; he must be, because independent; and providence there must be, because God must know all things; and as he is a most righteous being, he will take care of all things, or display his unsearchable wifdom.

dom, his unalterable rectitude, and immense goodness in his care of all things. Certainly what was worthy being produc'd by him at first, is still worthy his notice and providential care, otherwise you suppose he trifled in his first production of things: his own works therefore he will look after, and his own offspring he will love, and hate nothing his hands have form'd. If any of them, by an abuse of their original powers, debase themselves, he will nevertheless take all due care of them too; and should this care of his be sometimes to us inexplicable; the reason must be weakness on our part, and not any thing wrong on his, inafmuch as we can no more penetrate into all the reasons of his conduct, than our knowledge can be omniscience, and our power omnipotence, or our short duration should be eternity, and our limited existence omni-presence.

#### COROLLARY IX.

All atheistical notions must be false, and all atheistical practices very wrong (f).

All such notions must be false, since there is demonstration against them; as evidently salse, as a proposition contrary to any mathematical one must be so. Therefore speculative atheism is inexcusable: and so is practical atheism: that stands in direct opposition to all truth; this in opposition to all right and situes; that is against all evidence, this against all interest. An atheistical persuasion

(f) Athei antiqui funt, Theodorus quil dixit nugas esse, qui de Diis sermones habentur, nec eos esse; quare omnes ad furta et omne nesas hortabatur: Protagoras Abdorita, Campaneus, Mezentius, Giancus, Ajax Oelei silius qui Cassand, in templo Minervæ stupravit, et in mare percussus est; Pentheus sacrorum Bacchi contemtor et a matre cæterisque manadibus interemtus; Lycaon rex Arcadiæ, Aleithoe, Erisschon qui Cereris Lucum abscidit, et ad tantam samem compulsus, ut sua membra corroderet; Prætides, Attalanta et Hippomenes, Diomedes, Briareus, et ceteri gigantes, Phlegyas Lapitharum Rex, Salmoneus, &c.

It has often been indeed, and not without reason, question'd whether there ever was a speculative Atheist, and whether it be possible, that there can be one: however, it is, alas, too true, there are abundance of practical Atheists, men who never enquire whether there is a God; but leave this as an idle speculation to such as know not how to make, as they think, the best use of life: and multitudes there are who live and die ignorant of many self-evident truths, because they

never confider'd them.

is the most monstrous delusion, and an atheistical disposition the most unnatural temper.

# COROLLARY X.

It is false, that all theology and religion are owing to revelation.

For it is demonstrated, by reason unassisted by revelation, that God is, and that he is a being of all perfection, natural and moral. Hence it follows most evidently, that he is infinitely amiable, and infinitely venerable; the supreme object of contemplation and affection; infinitely worthy of our most chearful obedience and sincerest submission; in short, worthy of our most exalted apprehensions, our best affections, most reverential homage, and unreserved obedience (g). All this is necessarily consequential from his perfections (b), and the certain consequences of any

(g) Ταυτα χρη η περι θευ διανομιθαι, Δυναμει οντος ιχυμπατε, Καλλει θε ευπρεπεσατε, ζοη δε αθανατε, Αρετη κραπε. Ant 1 de Mund. c. 6.

(b) Nec jam verebor sidei universalis dogmata enumerare, vidilicet, I. Deum, i. e. ens supremum, summe justum & miscricordem existere, qui enim nescit vel non credit ipsum existere, ei obedire nequit, neque eum judicem noscere. II. Eumesse unicum. III. Eum ubique esse præsentem. IV. Ipsum in omnia supremum habere jus et dominium. V. Cultum Dei ejusque obedientiam in sola justitia & charitate erga proximum consistere. VI. Omnes qui hac vivendi ratione obediunt, salvos tantum fore, reliquos autem perditos. VII. Denique Deum pœnitentibus peccata condo-

any proposition are as certainly true as the proposition itself. Nay, one would think, it is as natural for any that knows God, and fleadily contemplates his adorable perfections, to love. to reverence him, and cultivate every divine temper towards him; as it is for one after a long tedious confinement in some lonely dark cavern, brought into open davlight, and beholding the fun in all his glory chearing the animal world, and illumining all nature, to be pleas'd highly, almost to transport with this fountain of light and heat, and to wish it may continue to diffuse it's beams all around. But of the proper tempers and duties which reason alone teaches us are owing to God, we may perhaps discourse hereafter in another part of this performance. See however, how apt men are to run into extremes. as to every thing relating to God in particular: according to fome, there is no religion but reveal'd: and according to others, none but what is natural: but both are mistaken; the former, as we have just now shewn; the latter, as we could easily prove; but this our defign at present does not require from us. May both natural and

nare. Spin. Tract. Theolog. Pol. 235, 236. An execlient fummary of Natural Theology, confider'd as drawn up by an Atheift.

SECT. IV. Argument a Priori. 195 and reveal'd religion be well understood, and with great fincerity practifed, the former by our deistical gentlemen, and both by us Christians.



O 2 PART

# PART III.

Or an Appendix to the two former, in answer to some objections against God's moral character.

In which several points collateral to the preceding discourses are impartially examin'd, viz. the origin of Evil, the promiscuous state of things here, human nature in a moral View, &c.

# OBJECTION L

Our reason is fallacious, and divine moral persections unintelligible, or divine sovereignty absolute.

EUSEB. WHEN we were last together, endeavouring to discover and prove, only by reason, the being and perfections of God; we observed that some conceive

of him not as a perfect being, in his moral character, but capricious (i), tyrannical, shewing little or no regard to the eternal rule of right, or the fitness or unfitness of things: let us now resume the subject, which it was not then proper to infift upon at large, and dwell awhile upon it. For a flaw in his moral character would render his natural attributes unamiable; nay, shocking to every impartial fearcher after theological truth: the exertion of refiftless power not under the direction of perfect wisdom and goodness would certainly put all thinking persons upon wishing, there were no God of this nature, should they in the least suspect his existence. This notion of him tends to root up every principle of love and duty to him, and to beget nothing in their room but an unconquerable aversion to him. It is certain, we can no more esteem, and honour mere power, without wisdom and goodness, tho' stil'd sovereignty, or whatever people please, than we can see with our ears, or hear with our eyes: for every agreeable affection of the heart must have a proper object, as well as every fensation it's proper

<sup>(</sup>i) To believe every thing is govern'd for the best by a designing principle, is to be a perfect Theist: and to b lieve no one designing principle, but two or three rather, or more, tho' in their nature good, is to be a Polytheist: to believe the governing mind or minds not confin'd to what is best, but acting according to mere humour or fancy, is to be a mere Dæmonist. Lord Shastsbury's Characteristics, vol. 2. p. 11.

organ, and a proper object to affect the organ. But power thus circumstanc'd is no more an object of esteem and reverence than a thunder-clap, a tempest or earthquake; and the greater the power, the greater must the horror caused by it be; therefore if it be infinite, the horror from the thoughts of it must be unspeakable. The blessed God must consequently be against the spreading this notion of himself, tho' he will make all reasonable allowances for the involuntary mistakes of such as do it.

And the mistaken votaries of such a Deity. if they confider duely, can approach him only as the idolatrous Romans did their temples erected to plagues and fevers, or as the Ammonites and Phenicians came to their Moloch, Baal, and fuch devouring idols, to facrifice their children, and cut and flash themselves, Indeed the gay and fanguine, if not apt to think much, may imagine a capricious Deity might be their friend: but the cool and thoughtful could not think honourably of him, nor ferve him willingly: the former might imagine, they could make their court to him, and secure his friendship, by religious flatteries and compliments, by little tricks and contrivances: but the latter must be gloomy and perplex'd, ignorant how they might footh him, and quite at a loss how he would refent their officious endeavours to gain his favour. Accordingly we may find, that in fact the devotion of the worshippers of

fuch a Deity was all horror with the natural expressions of it, bitter groans and howlings; and their piety was little else than uneasy sufpicions and anxious fears, fo that the more troublesome these were to themselves, the better was their opinion both of themselves, and of their Deity. Thus it is with the flaves of a proud tyrant, whose caprice is his principle, whose will is his law; miserable and dastardly are they, hating him because they dread him, and obeying him, not because they chuse it, but because they dare not, or cannot help it: but with a free people it is quite the reverse; they are subject not for wrath, but for conscience sake, if they be wise as well as free. This notion of God is fo wrong, and the confequences naturally flowing from it fo abfurd and pernicious to religion, and the peace of our minds; that it is fomewhat strange any should be fond of it, and stranger still that they should pretend they find it in revelation, fince no divine revelation can contradict the genuine dictates of reason: for it is by reason we judge of revelation, whether it be real or only a forgery; otherwise every revery of the superfitious or enthusiastic, every imposture and pious fraud of the crafty and avaritious may all be palm'd upon us as revelation, and we must all of us at our peril refuse to be believers in any delirious devotionist or wicked impostor, whether the priest or politician, that is disposed to tell us he is inspir'd. Indeed 0 4 thole

those who give us this notion of God, at once sadly misrepresent him, and decry reason as an ignis fatuus, an uncertain, nay, a sallacious guide; and say the moral persections of God are very different from our good moral tempers, and therefore there is no arguing from what is right and sit in us to what is so in him. What are your thoughts of all this?

THEOPH. Why, in the first place I must say, it is very odd, nay, profane, in any to ridicule reason, that excellent light which God has given us, for our direction: it is a most (k) excellent gift, since by this we are but a little lower than angels, and without it we should be only another species of brutes. It is certain, that they who are no friends to reason, find it is no friend to them; or as one justly observes, none are against reason, but such as have reason against them. Therefore every one should forbear all invectives against

(k) In homine optimum quid est? Ratio; hac antecedit animalia, Deos sequitur. Senec. Epist. 27.

Men may vilify reason as much as they please, and tho' being revil'd she reviles not again; yet in a more still and gentle way she commonly hath her soll revenge upon all those that rail at her. I have observed that people can with patience hear their teachers and guides talk against reason; and not only so, but they pay them greater submission and veneration for it. One would think this but an odd way of gaining authority over the minds of men: but some skilful and designing men have sound by experience, that it is a good way to recommend them to the ignorant, as nurses endear themselves to children, by perpetual noise and nonsense. Archbishop Tillotson.

against reason, otherwise they will only shew that it is against them, or that they are engaged in defence of fomething unreasonable. For all fects well know, that it is by the aid of this divine light alone we are able to make a stand against superstition and religious imposture, against all false philosophy and (which is worse) false divinity. Without this guide, even revelation itself may be turn'd into gross nonsense, and render'd no better than popish legends, rabbinnical tales, or the Koran of Mahomet; it will be but a nose of wax, which you may diffort and form into any shape: but understood and explain'd according to reafon, it is an inestimable treasury of all moral and divine truth. Therefore fetting reafon afide as useless, or rather mischievous, is not extinguishing one glorious light only in the moral world; but two, reason and revelation, and spreading such darkness and horror there, as you would in the world natural, should you extinguish the fun. Let us not then, for God's fake and our own, renounce our reason in religion, upon any account; for as God has given us eyes, and fet up the fun in the heavens, to fee by; so he has given us understanding and reason, and expects that we should use these as well as those: it would be horrid ingratitude to him, and a fad prejudice to ourselves, not to do it, as it would be to pull out our eyes, because they do not enable us to fee the minutest, and also the most most distant objects. As our eyes, so our reason is sufficient for us, and that is enough: those serve our purposes, with care, and taking such affistance as may be had; and reason answers all our purposes too, with a good use

of it, and the affistance of revelation.

But you observe too, that some (1) pretend the moral perfections of God as myste. rious and unintelligible: whoever they are, they are much to blame. For from this account of them it follows, that we can have no certain ideas of them; that they cannot be the objects of Thought; that we cannot demonstrate and explain them; that we cannot be fure whether we speak true or false of God, when we affert he is wise, just, good, &c. because we say we know not what; that we cannot know how we may worship him acceptably, and imitate him in reality, he being an unknown God; and, to add no more consequences, for any thing we know, we may gain his favour as well by being vicious as virtuous, impious and diabolical as godlike:

<sup>(1)</sup> What objection is more frequent with infidels and libertines than this, that the Deity is only a complication of high founding words without any meaning. Intellect, Syft. 640, &c. Thus Mr. Guildon the Deift: supposing the existence of a first cause, of what import would it be to us, unless we were better acquainted with his divine and infinite nature than confists with a being so finite as man, which can never comprehend an infinite? And if we cannot comprehend his nature, neither can we comprehend his will, &c. Deits Manual, P. 51.

these are the necessary conclusions of this supposition concerning the mysteriousness of the divine perfections: but they are wretched conclusions, and so must the principle be from which they slow, because from truth nothing but truth is deducible.

But here observe, tho' good moral tempers are the same in kind in God as in us: yet in some cases, the instances of both may be very different. Divine virtues are perfect, human virtues imperfect; the displays therefore of those may have nothing similar in the expressions of these. To instance in justice: it is certain, he will do nothing but what is right; yet as he gave us existence, he may take it away. And as to his goodness, he may bestow his original favours differently; he may make different ranks of beings, higher and lower; and may form very different beings of the same rank, in feveral respects; and he actually has done both. Who will fay, that if God produce any beings, they must in reason be as perfect, and as little below himfelf as possible? No, reason shews, that if God will form beings, he will chuse to produce a variety of beings, fince it is variety with uniformity that constitutes the beauty of the creation; and not that he should produce only one fingle rank of creatures, exactly uniform, and as perfect as was possible to him: and it requires only that happiness be communicated to different beings, according

according to their different capacities, whether given by him, or contracted by themfelves. In short, as the author of all things he may do many things which we may not. and yet be most just, fince from the different relations of moral agents, must result different rights and obligations. But still moral perfections are the same in kind in him and us. as they are the same in a prince and a peafant. Some indeed imagine God has an unlimited right over his creatures, to do in effect whatever can be thought of: but an unlimited right can be in none, fince it is a contradiction; for right supposes a rule, an unlimited right that there is no rule, which is a contradiction in terms. No; as we must do to one another as we would have others do to us; so even must the supreme being do to us as he would chuse that we should do to him, were it possible that he should be in our flead, and we in his: or, as one (m) expresses it. " For be all these monstrous speculations from every virtuous mind, viz. " that God can do any thing unfit, or against " reason, and the like. Nor can I think as

<sup>(</sup>m) Facessant procul ergo a piis mentibus montrose ille speculationes, plus Deum aliquid posse quam conveniat, vel eum fine modo et ratione quicquam agere. Nec vero commentum illud recipio, Deum, quia lege folutus fit, reprehen-fione vacare; Deum enim qui ex legem facit, maxima eum gloriæ suæ parte spoliat, qui rectitudinem ejus et justitiam sepelit. Calv. opusc de ætern. prædest. p. 843. N. B. Magna est veritas et prævalebit!

OBJ. I. Moral character answer'd. 205

" some do, that he is therefore exempt from
" all reprehension, because he is under no
" law, no ordinance. For he who makes
" God lawless, despoils him of his greatest
" glory, because he destroys the divine rec" titude."



# OBJECTION. II.

Virtue is distressed, and Vice profperous.

Euseb. TO doubt, God is perfect in his moral as well as his natural character, according to our ideas of perfect virtue, otherwise many horrid consequences will be most melancholy certain truths: but then what must we say of the promiseuous distribution of good and evil here? It is such as has tempted many in all ages to conclude, that either God is not perfect in virtue; or that he does not concern himself about human affairs, as no great prince troubles himfelf about the minute concerns of infects or worms, or will be umpire between flies and spiders; or that fome malevolent principle prefides over all, fince frequently the virtuous are punish'd, and

and the vicious rewarded. How may we reconcile perfect virtue, and such a puzzling
distribution of good and evil to one another?
For it is certain, divine virtue is perfect,
God is, nay, must be the ruler of the universe; and, an infinitely evil principle neither
is nor can be.

THEOPH. This conduct of the Deity, it feems puzzles you as it has many before you, who have taken but a very partial view of it: for this, like viewing but a small part of a compleat piece of tapeftry, affords us a very imperfect and defective idea of the thing. So when an actor at Athens spoke with admiration of riches, as the most valuable acquifition, and of the felicity of the rich as incomparably the chief good; the people were all in an uproar at the immorality of the piece that was acting, and going not only to his the actor off, but to chase him from the stage: but Euripides the author interpos'd, defiring them to have a little patience, and they would see the catastrophe of the fordid mifer (n). This has been the common cause, as Simplicius upon Epictetus (0) observes, of

(ο) Συμβαινει δε τινας κ, δια το αναποδεκιτως πισευεν, κ) εία το οραν ποτε μεν αγαθες δυσυχεντας, ποτε δε κακες εν εχυτοις

<sup>(</sup>n) Ω χρυσε δεξιωμα καλλισου βροτοις, &c. Cum hi novisimi verius in trajedia Euripidis pronuntiati essent, totus populus ad ejiciendum et actorem et carmen consurrexit uno impetu: donec Euripides in medium profiliuit petens ut expectarent, viderentque quem admirator auri exitum faceret. Sen. Epist. 115.

many in the heathen world turning Atheists.
"Such as have no rational belief of a Deity.

- "when they observe the prosperity of the
- " bad, and the adverfity of the good, regard
- " not the common notions they have of God,
- " but are apt to cry out with Aristophanes in
- " his Plutus,
- " Shall I not dare to fay there are no Gods,
- " when they do prosper who have injur'd me?"

So Diagoras refolv'd to turn Atheist, when he saw a perjur'd wretch living in prosperity: and Jason, upon seeing Medea making her escape, after the unnatural murther of her own children, also exclaim'd thus (p),

Go, tell the world, there are no Gods that way Where thou dost fly.

Nay, we see often proud and ambitious princes, like the murthering Alexander the Great, Julius Cesar, and many more intoxicated with power, and wantonly facrificing great numbers of their own species to their pride, lust of dominion, fordid avarice or revenge,

εαυτοις ενορεντας, υλιγωρεν ων εχεσι προλη ξεων, η χωραν δίτ δοναι τη τραγωδια λεγεν,

Τολμω κατειπειν μη ποτ' κκ εισιν Θεοι

Kα οι γαρ ευτυχευτες επιπληττεσι με.
Simplic. Comment. in Epict. c. 38. p. 223.
(p) Testare nullos qua veheris esse Deos. Senec. Med.

OBJ. II. Moral character answer'd.

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venge, yet meeting with success, victories, conquests, and rioting in power, plenty and pleasures: and on the other hand, we know many a virtuous Epistetus, or humble Lazar, all deform'd, maim'd, in pain and poverty, a most miserable condition.

But yet, neither the being, nor perfections, nor providence of God must be denied, because they are all certain: let us then try, if we cannot remove this difficulty which has given much disturbance to many well-disposed minds, and driven the vain and vicious to Atheism itself. First, it is certain, that often we are ignorant who are, and who are not virtuous (q); and we know not how P good

(4) The following Fewish tradition concerning Moses may not only be entertaining, but very instructive. This great prophet, it is faid, was called up by a voice from heaven to the top of a mountain; where in a conference with the Supreme Being, he was permitted to put fome questions to him concerning his providence. In the midst of this divine colloquy, he was bid to look down upon the plains below. At the foot of the mountain there issued out a clear spring of water, at which a soldier alighted from his horse to drink. He was no fooner gone than a little boy came to the fame place, and finding a purse of gold which the soldier had dropped, took it up and went off with it. Immediately after this came an infirm old man, weary with age and travelling, and after he had quench'd his thirst, fat down to rest himself at the fide of the spring. The foldier misling his purse, returns to fearch for it, and finding the old man fat down, demanded it of him, who affirms he had not feen it, and appeals to heaven in witness of his innocence. The foldier not regarding what he afferted, kills him. Moses fell on his face with horror and amazement, and going to expostulate upon the case, was thus prevented by the divine voice. Be not furpriz'd,

good the good are, how bad the vicious are; those may be worse, and these better than we apprehend. Therefore, when these are in prosperity, and those in adversity, the former may be fuffering in adverfity the due rewards of their foolish conduct in many instances, and the latter receiving a reward of their wife conduct; both which are undeniably fit and equal. The great common parent certainly distinguishes not only between good and bad people, but also between the good and bad in one and the same character, and impartially rewards or punishes the virtuous and vicious. -- Again; suppose we are not mistaken in our opinions of the moral character of others: yet it is not injustice in God, to inflict adversity on the virtuous, and bestow prosperity on the vicious. It is not injustice to the vicious, it is certain, but no more than if the magistrate allow some few conveniences to a malefactor before his trial and execution. Besides, all the profperity of the worst, what is it; is it some very great good, that there is so much ado about it? We perhaps think fo; but then we are mistaken, fince both the nature and duration of it are fuch as fhew we have too high an opinion of it. The little worthless toys of a child are to the little unthinking

furpriz'd, Moses, nor ask why the judge of the whole earth has suffer'd this thing to come to pass: the child is the occasion of the blood of the old man being spilt; but know thou, that old man was the murderer of the child's Father. thinking creature things of great value, better than jewels, crowns or fcepters: but when he thinks and judges better in time, any may have his hobby-horse or rattles for him. Neither, on the contrary, is the advertity of the good any injustice to them, unless doing them a kindness against their wills be injustice. Nor does this feemingly unequal distribution of good and evil shew there is in God any approbation of the vicious, or diflike of the virtuous; because it is evident, that he may take this method with the former for their reformation (r), and with the latter for their improvement: and if those turn their remedies into poisons, that is their fault only; and if these do not approve of this method, it is because it is not very pleasant; and not because it is not proper and useful; for any who know what human nature is at prefent, know it is often worse for a plentiful fortune, as the body is for a Plethora. As in the natural world, it is fit that the rain should fall,

<sup>(</sup>r) Οθευ ακ ατυχίαυ ενεγκευ εμμέλως χαλεπωτερου ες ιυ, αλλ ευτυχίαυ. παυτες μευ γαρ ευ ατυχία μενουτες, ως επε πολυ μετριοι η κοσμιοι το πθος πμευ φαινουται ευθ ευπραγια γιαις αυθηρείοι, μεγαλοφρούες, μεγαλοφυχοι. Θείνα γαρ ατυγια συναγαγευ η καταρτήσαι ταυ ψυχαύ α θ'ευπραγια τουπαντιου επαραι η κενωσαι. Θιο ποθεκτικοί μευ απαυτες βουστοι του τροπου, ατυχεούτες επιθετικοί θε η θαρσαλει του τροπου, ευτυχεούτες. Fragm. quædam Pythagor. P. 21.

Ωσωερ γαρ το λαμωρου φαος μαραυγιαυ περιτιθησι τοις εθαλμοις ετω η α υπερβαλλουσα ευτυχια τω νοω τας ψυχας. bid. p. 2 2

and the fun shine upon highways, the flinty rocks, and barren fandy defarts, as well as upon flowry and verdant meads, gardens, and other inclosures: so in the moral world, it is right that bleffings should descend upon the bad as well as good; nay, that evils also should befal these as well as those: further: as God often makes no difference between good and bad here sufficient for the vindication of his honour as the moral rector of the world, he therefore will, I had almost faid he must, do it hereafter in some part of his Let us then have but a little patience, and wait his time of the revelation of his righteous judgment, and we shall foon see all feeming inequalities in his conduct fet streight, his whole scheme of government clear'd up, and those measures of his which now feem to some little else than blunders in his moral government, to be bright inflances of wisdom, equity, and goodness. It is no objection against any human government, that the magistrate does not directly take the malefactor and hang him up in chains as foon as the crime is committed: not to beable to fuffer offenders to live a while, would manifest both great impatience and weakness: and not to be able to give necessary correction to the good, would discover a fondness dishonourable in itself, and pernicious to them. The delay therefore of the deferved punishment

ment of the bad, and the present correction of the good discovers the divine patience, good will, and purity. Thus this troublesome objection vanishes, for the things objected are

right, wife and falutary.

But once more; tho' it be fit that things should be just as they are, considering the state of human nature at present, the nature of our present condition, that it is a state of discipline, and therefore that it is in order to an after state: yet things do not always go on in this promiscuous manner; but in all ages there have veen fo many and great differences put between the vicious and virtuous, as are fufficient to shew every careful observer, that God has not forfaken the earth; being not unlike our privy fessions, which are a proof justice is not neglected, but a more folemn audit is to be expected. Thus, the uncommon interpolitions of providence, in behalf of the cause of virtue, prove it is dear to God, and portend it shall finally flourish: as the fasces carried before the supreme magistrate in the Roman commonwealth, which struck a terror of offending, and inspir'd hope of justice being executed.

Now lay all this together, and it will appear there is no force in this objection: the vicious, you say, prosper: but you are missaken sometimes, in your opinion of the character of the person: and grant you are

(1) The Tol Eye peter xpuser repasse represents. Il. x. This cow, whose horns o'er tipe with gold look bright, You shall have offer'd, Pallas, as your right.

<sup>(</sup>s) Πεπειρασι γαρ περι ποσα πλαυκθες, εδαμε ευρες το εξ ζην' εκ εν συλλογισμοις, εκ εν πλετα, εκ εν δοξη, εκ εν απελαυσει, εδαμε πε εν ες εν τω ποιεν α επιζητει η τε ανθρωπε ουσις. Μ. Anton. Imp. de feipfo, lib. 8. in int.

notion of his character, fince it often happens a vicious wretch conceals himself under salse disguises; and of his condition (u), fince people

(\*) Non possidentem multa vocaveris Reste beatum. Restius occupat Nomen beati, qui Deorum Muneribus sapienter uti,

Duramque callet pauperiem pati, Pejusque Letho flagitium timet: Non ille pro caris amicis Aut patria timidus perire.

Hor. Carm. L. 4. O. 9.

Believe not those that lands posses, And shining heaps of useless ore. The only lords of happiness. But rather those that know For what kind fates bestow And have the art to use the store:

That have the generous skill to bear.
The hated weight of poverty,
Who more than death will baseness fear,
Who nobly, to defend
Their country or their friend,
Embrace their sate, and gladly die.

Creech's Horace.

Crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam,
Majorumque sames. Jure per horrui
Late conspicuum tollere verticem,
Mæcenas equitum decus.

Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit
A diis plura feret. Nil cupientium
Nudus castra peto; et transsuga divitum
Partes relinquere gestio.

Contemte

ple frequently appear to us far more happy or miserable than they really are; some purposely conceal their miseries, as Philip de Comines, that excellent historian, assures us from his own knowledge of many great courtiers in the French court; and many virtuous people silently enjoy their secret calm, their joyous conscious virtue, and delightful hopes of suture rewards. Does not your virtuous sufferer often reap no more than the fruit of his past follies, in the sorrows he meets with? And

are

Contemtae dominus splendidior rei, Quam fi, quidquid arat non piger Appulus, Occultare meis dicerer horreis Magnas inter opes inops.

Puræ rivus aquæ, filvaque jugerum Paucorum, et segetis certa sides meæ Fulgentem imperio sertilis Africæ Fallit, sorte beatior.

Quanquam nec Calabræ mella ferunt apes Nec Læffrigonia Bacchus in Amphora Languescit mihi, nec pinguia Gallicis Crescunt vellera pascuis.

Importuna tamen pauperies abest :
Nec, si plura velim, tu dare deneges.
Contracta melius parva cupidine
Vectigalia porrigam,

Quam si Migdoniis regnum Halyattici Campis continuem. Multa petentibus Desunt multa. Bene est cui Deus obtulit Parca, quod satis est, manu.

Hor. Carm. L. 3. 0. 16.

are they not castigatory and medicinal? Should therefore the common parent of the universe spare the rod, he would hate his offspring; but he loves them, and therefore chastens them. And what, are their forrows great? Then they will be short and momentary, and therefore no just ground of complaint; if they are light, it would be a shame to grieve and complain, as it would be weak and child-ish. In a word, the present scene is passing away.

Care still attends increasing store,
And craving appetite for more;
Maccenas, honour of our knights,
How justly was thy friend asraid,
To raise his too conspicuous head,
And soar too lofty, and to envy'd heights?

Those that do much themselves deny,
Receive more blessings from the sky:
I love a mean and safe retreat;
And naked now, with haste retire,
To humble those who nought desire;
And joy to leave the party of the great:

In my scorn'd farm a greater lord,
Than if my crouded barns were stor'd
With all the stout Appulian reaps;
Than if to me Pastolus ran,
And roul'd in slowing tides of gain,
Whilst I was poor amidst my mighty heaps.

A purling stream, a shady grove
To raise my song,
My farm that ne'er deceives my hopes,
Make me seem happier to the wise,
Tho' not to base and vulgar eyes,
Than he that boasts his fruitful Lybia's crops.

away, and quickly all the regular confusion in providence will end in a most exact adjustment of things, at the solemn conclusion on the great judgment day. For can any think the material world is all order and harmony, and yet the intellectual and moral world can be nothing but confusion? It is not possible.

Tho' no Calabrian bees do give
Their grateful tribute to my hive;
No wines by rich Campania fent
In my ignoble casks ferment;
No slocks in Gallick plains grow fat;
Yet I am free from pinching want,
And begg'd I more my lord would grant;
And to my wishes equal my estate.

But now more fafe, and more securely blest, Than if my hand grasp'd East and West: He that asks much, must still want more, Happy! to whom indulgent Heav'n Enough and sparingly has giv'n,

And made his mind proportion'd to his store.

Chreech's Horace.

This representation of a happy life, drawn by the prince of the lyric poets, is so just and beautiful, that the learned reader will not take it amis to find it here, and the unlearned will probably be highly pleas'd with the translation of it, as perhaps it may be new to him; tho indeed it is much inferior to the inimitable original.



# OBJECTION III.

Human nature, a divine production, is originally corrupt and vicious.

MY last objection against the EUSEB. moral character of God is anfwer'd to my full fatisfaction. I wish there may be reason to say as much concerning this other, which I am now going to propose, from the existence of moral evil in our world, that fource of all other evils. My query then is, whence comes moral evil, if the divine moral character be perfect, and an infinitely evil principle be impossible? Or, that I may put it as I find Epicurus and others have done; whence comes evil, fince God is either willing to prevent it, but not able; or able, but not willing, or neither able nor willing, or both able and willing? If able, but

but unwilling, he must be malevolent; if willing, but unable, he must be impotent; if neither able nor willing, he must be both impotent and malevolent; if both able and willing, then evil had never been (x).

Some, I own, discourage all enquiries into this subject, from an apprehension that it is too difficult for us to manage them rightly; therefore, they fay, we ought to rest content with believing that God is infinitely wife and good, and refer the folution of this objection for another time and world, where we shall be free from the imbecillity, mistakes and prejudices that now attend us, and be better qualified for a task so difficult. But I cannot be of this mind, fince our own experience and observation irrefistably convince us there is abundance of evil here; evil of imperfection, as weak faculties, a short understanding, and an unsettled judgment; natural evil, as pain of all degrees and kinds; and moral evil, wrong defires, refolutions, and practices. Therefore, a thinking mind has it not in it's choice, not to think of this question; and to fuch an one it is no answer, to say that he ought not to trouble his head about it; and to a vicious atheistical querist it is to no purpole

<sup>(</sup>x) Cum melius fit in mundo nulla esse peccata, et tamen regnent, non est Deus, alioquin illa tollere deberet.—Si Deus esset, sicut nec facere, ita neque permittere va'eret, ut peccata serent, permittit tamen, igitur non est. Van. in Amph. Provid.

pose to return this answer. Thus Simplicius (y) tells us, that " the disputes concerning " the nature and origin of evil not being well " fettled, hence sprung great impiety against " the Gods, bad moral principles, and innu-" merable unsurmountable objections." It must then, methinks, not only be allowable, but expedient to confider this question, which, if we refuse, atheistical men will discuss, and take a dreadful advantage from our filence about it, to propagate horrid falshoods to the dishonour of God, the destruction of morality, as well as of religion, and of the peace of many. The all-perfect Deity doubtless does nothing unworthy of himself, and therefore nothing which should not be examin'd into, and brought to light as much as possible:

(ν) Περι της υπος ασεως των κακων ο λογος μη καλως διορβωθεις, κ) της περι το Θειον ασεβειας αιτιος γεγονε, κ) της του ηθων ευαγωγιας τας αρχας διεταραξε, κ) πολλαις κ) αλυτοις υποριαις ανεβαλε τες μη καλως αιτιολογεντας αυτην.

Simp. Comment. in Epict. C. 34.

No doubt moral evil had not been permitted, had not God been able to bring good out of even this evil: but he who can make light spring out of darkness, can now display his adorable grace in assisting and pardoning the returning sinner. And man has now an opportunity of practising many excellent virtues, which without moral evil there could have been no need of; and even to this he owes some of the greatest pleafures of the virtuous kind: were there no night in nature, there would be no morning; and were there no enemy, there could be no victory; so in the moral world, the most exalted joys succeed virtuous forrows, and the most entertaining delights, or rather transports, follow painful conslicts and tedious dubious struggles. In a word, sin is led captive by the power of righteousness, and by the admirable wisdom of God serves to illustrate his goodness.

let error and delusion shun the light, and sly from the most careful search; but truth and right love light, and invite our strictest examination and researches. Is not this right; And is it not sit, as I have proposed my objection, that I should vindicate the proposal of it?

Atheists will; so that we are not at our liberty to pass over it in silence; nor need we despair of finding out a sufficient answer to all that they can possibly offer upon it, against the moral character of God.

In order to this, let it first be consider'd, that the perfections of God did not oblige him to make fuch a fystem exactly as our's, of it's present magnitude even to an atom, and of it's present compass to an hair's breadth, nor with all the species of beings now belonging to it, whether vegetable, animal, or rational, and the present number of each. A variety of beings then God might produce, if he pleased; otherwise it will follow, that he cannot exercise his perfections in any production, short of the most perfect that he is capable of bringing into existence; and consequently, as his perfections are infinite, that therefore his productions must be all infinite; or, if that is not possible, they must be the next degree to it. But let any prove this, or thew that a vegetable or animal should not have

have been produc'd, nothing but beings of the highest possible perfection; this none can shew, fince the communication of any one degree of perfection below the very highest of all is a kindness, and consequently a proof of divine goodness and wisdom, as we will soon prove, and no injustice to the inferior being, but a kindness. A variety of beings then is confiftent with every perfection of God, and with our best ideas of right, and wisdom, provided he produce none but whose existence is better to them than non-existence. And a variety of beings is not only a display of the divine perfections, but an entertainment to intelligent creatures: and tho' it be possible, some of them may wish they had been advanc'd higher in the scale of created existence; yet this very probably is but a rare wish, and attended with no great uneafiness. Have we ever either known or heard of any who could not enjoy his existence with any ease, because there are several ranks of beings superior to him? The extreme mankind run into generally, is the contrary (2), too great a propenfity

<sup>(2)</sup> Εγω δ' εσοπτρού εινν,
Οπως αει βλεπης με.
Εγω χιτων γενοιμην
Οπως αει φορης με
Υδωρ θελα γενεδαι
Οπως σε χρωτα λισω.
Μυρου, γυναι, γενοιμην,
Οπως εγω σ'αλειφω

Objections against God's PART III. pensity to the animal life: so that if there be any thing amiss with them in their present fituation in existence, it is that they are plac'd so high in the creation: of the two, they would rather chuse to descend than ascend in the scale of being, and be of the carnivorous. or fome other brutal tribe, than of the feraphic, or any other angelic order; as the base voluptuous wretch, who wish'd he had a throat as long as the crane's, that his gluttonous pleasures might be proportionably prolong'd. However, a variety of beings is certainly to the honour of the great former of all things, and to the entertainment of his rational creatures. This is in the creation very fimilar to variety of notes, in mufick, of colours in painting, of features and lineaments in statuary, and of contrivance in architecture: fo important is it, that without it there

Και ταινιη δε ματων, Και μαργαρου τραχηλω Και σανδαλου γενοιμην, Μονον, ποσιν πατων με.

Anacreon, p. 65, 66.
Videas etiam Theocriti Idyll. 3. 1. 12, &c.
Were I (who to my cost already am
One of those strange prodigious creatures man)
A spirit, free to chuse for my own share,
What case of sless and blood I'd please to wear,
I'd rather be a monkey, dog, or bear,
Or any thing than that vain animal,

would be no harmony, and no beauty in the

That boasts himself of being rational.

Sacire upon Man.

creation,

Who does not admire it in the creation. vegetable and brutal world; in the vegetable, the fragrancy of the rose, and the beauty of the tulip; in the brutal, the courage of the lion, and the gentleness of the lamb? And is it not as amiable in the higher, the intellectual world? Thus Simplicius (b) reasons upon it: " As an artificer would not make "all the parts of an animal eyes only; fo " neither has the divine logos or reason made " all creatures Gods; but fome Gods, fome " demons, some men, some inferior ani-" mals, not from envy, but that it might " display it's fecundity. But we are like un-" skilful spectators of a piece of painting, "condemning the painter, because he has "not laid on bright colours every where, " whereas he has given to each part it's proper " colour : or like those who would blame a " tragedy or comedy, only because all the " persons of the drama are not kings or he-" roes, but some are servants too, and clowns "acting in character: whereas the drama " would not be elegant nor taking, were "the low characters cast out."

But

(b) nower recours a marra ta er lan og Sanus Told, τος εδ' ο λογών παντα Θευς ειργαζετοι αλλα τα μεν θως, τα δε δαιμωνας δευτεραν φυσιν, ειτα Αυθρωπες κ) ζωα ετέμε, ε οθονω, αλλα λογω ποικιλιαν νοεραν εχοντι' ημεις ό ωστεροι απειροι γραφικής τεχνής αιτιώνται, ως ε καλά τα Хината пантине, об ара та проотноста апевыхи еказы του, η είτις Δραμα μεμφοίτο, οτι μη παυτές ηςωές εν αυτώ Gratine Plotin. p. 256.

But you may fay, what is all this concerning variety of beings to the purpose? Why, it is not a full solution of the difficulty, but rather an introduction to it. For either this must be allow'd to be right in the persect former of all, or we must say, either he should have made nothing, or else beings as persect as possible: but we have already prov'd, that a variety of beings is honourable to him, right in itself, and requisite

to the beauty of the creation.

And now we come to confider the objection directly, which hinges here, whether it be confistent with the divine perfections to make a being capable of virtue and vice, of happiness and misery? That is, whether there should be any rank of beings superior to flocks or brutes? For imperfection and peccability are involved in the very nature of a free agent, tho' ever fo highly advanc'd in the rank of created beings. Particularly, the query is, why has God made man, such a fallible and peccable creature, of weak reason and strong passions? Why such a creature as man, who, to speak pythagorically, is as the Isosceles between the Hopleuron and Scalenum, not so ordinate as the one, nor so inordinate as the other; the Nexus of the angelie and animal world, as the Zoophyton, or arimal plant, is supposed to be between the animal and vegetable world. An answer hereto

hereto requires, that we take a view of man confider'd as the creature of God: and if, upon taking this view of him, he appear a being worthy the divine perfections, the objection will vanish. Man is a compound creature (c), confifting of foul and body. As to his foul; it is a fimple, uniform, intelligent fubstance, endued with several faculties denominated from their objects, and diftinguish'd by the names of perception, judgment, and liberty. The perceptive faculty is that by which the foul takes notice of the objects presented to it; and in this it is passive. In the exercise of judgment it is free, for man can chuse whether he will retain or recal the impressions made upon him, and with what degree of exactness he will consider them, that he may difcern the relation between them: yet at length, he is not at liberty to determine as he will concerning the agreement

(c) Uti genus hominum compositum ex corpore et anima est; ita res cunctæ studiaque omnia nostra, corporis alia, alia, animi naturam sequuntur. Sallust. Bell. Jugurth.

Hominem ab stirpe ipsa neque absolute bonum nec malum msci: sed ad utrumque proclive ingenium esse. Habere quidem semina quædam utrarumque rerum, cum nascendi origine copulata, quæ educationis disciplina in alteram debeant partem

amicare Apul. de Philof.

Prima igitur et optima rerum natura pietatis est magistra, que nullo vocis ministerio, nullo usu literarum indigens, propris ac tacitis viribus, charitatem parentum pestoribus liberorum infundic. Quid ergo dostrina proficit? Ut politiora, scilicet, non ut meliora fiant ingenia: quoniam quidem solida virtus nascitur magis quam fingitur.

Valer. Max. lib. 5. cap. 4.

or disagreement of his ideas. Liberty is a power of acting, or not acting, according to his judgment concerning things, or his own These are our principal powers; conduct. to which the kind author of our frame has fuperadded many natural instincts or tendencies towards truth and virtue; as, a defire of knowtedge, focial affection, a fense of honour, love of order, or a sensus decori et bonesti. these, there are several modifications of the mind, owing to it's union to the body, as all the appetites, the passions and affections neceffary to the prefervation of life, and to the propagation of our species. All these powers, instincts, passions, affections, and appetites, consider'd as they refer to their original ends and uses, will appear worthy their author, and fit for man. It would be too tedious, neither is it necessary in the present enquiry, to prove this of every one particularly: all of them confider'd in their original state, and in the proper management of them appear unexceptionably fit: and no evil can be found, upon the most critical search, in the original frame of human nature, but that of imperfection, which in fome degree must be in the most perfect created being; and man's original imperfection, we shall shew, is not so great as to be dishonourable to his maker. Existence, in general, is better than nonexistence; the animal life than the inertia, or inactivity inactivity and infenfibility of matter; intelligence and liberty, than instinct and passion. In man these all meet, existence, life, infinet, passion, and liberty: and of them all, liberty is the most valuable, as here his inward approbation and applause are originally founded; as it is this which renders him capable of virtue and happiness, and without it all the difference betwixt him and a puppithew would be only this, that he would be conscious, the other unconscious: it is this. which, if rightly used, would render man like to God in rectitude and happiness, as the perfectly right use of it renders God happy in himself, and adorable to all intelligent beings. Therefore, the' by the abuse of it angels become devils, and men are become, too many of them, worse than the savage beasts of the forrest; yet to a right use of it all rational and moral excellency and enjoyment are to be ascribed: it must then be a most valuable gift of God, and be confess'd to be fo, by all who acknowledge there is a difference betwixt appetite and reason, betwixt the animal and rational life, and between animal and rational pleafures; and are willing to grant, that the abuse of any thing is no good argument against it. Man indeed, in his infantile state, is a most helpless creature; but when grown up to a mature use of reason, if he employ his intelligence and liberty aright, improving himself in all virtuous tempers, and diffusing happiness all around him, according to his ability; he is an excellent being, like the Deity, aspiring after, and fitting himself for a glorious and happy state of existence, But should he, on the contrary, abuse his liberty, and become vicious and miserable; the fault is all his own, and he will lay the blame at his own door, and not upon his maker, for either giving him liberty at first, or leaving For the first him afterwards to his liberty. donation of it was a great favour, and the after continuance of it must therefore be so too: had God not made him at all, or not made him man, he had denied him this favour; and had he not continued it, but restrain'd him in the use of it, and by resistless might had influenc'd him to right action, then man would have been despoil'd of this gift of God: and tho' by this method he would have been render'd incapable of vice and mifery, he would have become equally incapable of virtue and happiness. But certainly of the two, it is better to be capable of virtue and vice, of happiness and misery, than to be incapable of any of them. Who that confiders things duely, would not, if he had it in his option, much rather be a man than a flock, or an odoriferous or beautiful plant, or an animal, whether of the flying, walking, creeping or swimming tribe; tho' he is probably the lowest

lowest of all intelligent ranks of beings, and a being in whom there is a mixture of understanding and passion often clashing with one another in this world, where there are two distinct sets of objects suited respectively to each? As mean a being as man is, if compar'd with superior orders of intelligent beings, he is far from being a creature unworthy his great former; none can prove he is so, but by proving that a variety of beings is inconsistent with the divine perfections, which is impossible; or by shewing that man should not have been made what he is, which likewise is impossible.

And now take the sum of what has been offer'd in answer to your last objection concerning man, from the following passage of that excellent writer (d) upon this argument, Simplicius. "Whether must not God be "the author of sin, since he gave liberty, "and permits man to abuse it? But he that saith, that God should not have stood by "and permitted him to do this, must affert

<sup>(</sup>d) Ει γωρ λεγοι τις, μηθε αυτη συγχωρεν του Θεον οφελευ αιρειθαι το καχου, εν των θυο λεγει η οτι περυκύ ων αυτην ποτε μεν το αγαθου αιρειθαι, ποτε θε καζον αναγκαι ζεν εθει μεθεποτε αιρειθαι το καχου η οτι τοιαυτηνεχρην υποσησει, ως μηθε περυκεναι ποτε το καχου αιρειθαι. άλλα το μεν πρωτον αυτοθι αλογου ματην γαρ η αιρειις ερ εκατερε περυκυια εγινετο, ει μηθεποτε εξην αυτη προς εκατερον ενεργων αλλ ουθε αιρεσις ην ετι παρεσης αναγης εναντιως γαρ εκαπρος την αναγην η αιρεσις ο θε θευτερος λογος, πρωτον μεν πρωται, οτι εθεμια τε καχε εθε ποτε ες εν αιρεσις. κ. τ. λ. Simp. Comment. in Epict. p. 163, 164.

one of these two things, either that the soul being free should have been hinder'd from ufing her liberty, or else that she should not have been intrusted with it at all. The former is abfurd, for what liberty can there be where there is no choice, and what choice when the mind is necessarily determin'd? As to the latter: no evil is eligible in itself; but if this self-determining power must be taken away, or should not have been bestow'd at all, the reason is, either because it is not good, or because very bad: but should any affert this, it would be because he does not consider there are many things much valued, and yet they are not to be compar'd to liberty, which excels all fublunary things; and there is none who would rather chuse to be a plant or brute than a man: if then God display'd his goodness in giving to inferior 66 beings perfections far inferior to this, was it .. unfit for a good God to give man this felfdetermining power, and then to permit him the free use of it? Besides, had God to prevent fin, taken away this power, after he had bestow'd it, he would thereby have destroy'd the foundation of virtue, and the very nature of man; for virtue could not have been, had there been no " possibility of acting wrong or right. Therefore, tho' we attribute this felf-determining ec power

"power to God as it's author, which was so necessary in the order of the universe; there's no reason to attribute also the origin of evil to him, which is produc'd by the abuse of that power. For God does not cause the aversion to good, which is in the vicious soul; but only gave it a power that might be abused to evil out of which God produces so much good, as could not have been without it."

In fine, it now plainly appears, that free agency, together with the natural consequence of it, peccability, or the possibility of moral evil and misery it's attendant, and that the greatest variety of free agents are all right and fit, and perhaps the best upon the whole.

EUSEB. I am well satisfy'd, that they are; and that man, tho' very sallible and peccable, is not such a despicable, nay, odious creature in his original state, as has been often represented, both by some philosophers and others. How have both set him before us, in the most odious colours! The philosopher of Malms-bury (e) gives the sollowing account of him: "The state of nature is a state of war, and man is not a sociable creature by nature, but by accident; all human society proceeds from fear, lust of dominion, self-interest, &c. Man is a creature born unmapt for society, and there is by nature a mutual

d) Hobbide homine, c. 10.

logy, or description of man: and according to this account of him, he is rather the offspring of some siend or sury, or the Manichean principle of evil, than of the perfectly
wise and good God. His nature and duty lie
quite cross to one another, one drawing one
way, the other the contrary. Take a poetic
account of him in the celebrated lines of a
noble, but atheistical poet.

O wearisome condition of humanity!

Born under one law, to another bound;

Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity.

Created fick, commanded to be found.

If nature did not take delight in blood,

She would have made more easy ways to

[good.]

Besides these, there are others (f), whose descriptions of human nature in it's original state

presented, as long fince as Aristotle's time, who affirmed that things, and particularly man, is ill constituted, inamuch as he is naturally more inclin'd to be vicious than virtuous. Aristophers, and particularly man, is ill constituted, inamuch as he is naturally more inclin'd to be vicious than virtuous. Aristophers, and manufactured that the probability of the probabi

flate are not less horrid at all: with them it is only a medley of a devil and a brute, naturally averse to all wisdom and goodness, and prone only

Prob. Sect. 10. and Prob. 44. Tho' he contradicts himself elsewhere, afferting that we are more naturally susceptive of

virtue. Aristot. Ethic. 1. 3 c. 1.

While no other ideas are given us, faith a much greater philosopher than Aristotle, of pleasure or advantage, than those that relate to the external senses; nor other affections reprefented as natural, fave those towards private good: it may be difficult to persuade many, even of those who are notenemies to virtue from inclination, of the wildom of the Deity, in making the biass of our nature opposite to his laws; and making all pleafure, the most natural character of good, attending the prohibited actions, or the indifferent ones; while obedience to the law must be a constrain'd course of action, inforc'd only by penalties contrary to our natural affections and fenfes. Nature and grace are by this scheme made very opposite. Whereas if the preceding account be true, we see no such inconfiftency: every passion and affection in it's moderate degree is innocent, many are directly amiable, and good morally: we have fenses and affections leading us to public as well as private good; to virtue as well as to external pleasure." The excellent professor of moral philosophy, Mr. Hutchinson's nature and conduct of the passions, p. 86, 87. Let me indulge my reader and myfelf the pleafure of confidering another of the fine passages in which this author abounds: if we call that flate, those affections and dispositions, natural to which we are inclin'd by some part of our constitution, antecedently to any volition of our own, or which flow from some principles in our nature, not brought upon us by our own art, or that of others; then it may appear, that a flate of good-will, humanity, compassion, mutual aid, propagating and supporting offspring, love of a community or country, devotion, or love and gratitude to some governing mind, is our natural state, to which we are naturally inclin'd, and do actually arrive as univerially, and with as much uniformity, as we do to a certain flature and shape. Ibid. p. 198, 199. These dispositions and affections are as much innate as teeth, nails and hair are fo in

only to folly and all evil. But is this a just description of man in a state of nature, which is given us by atheistical philosophers and poets, and by others of a very different character?

THEOPH. Whoever they are, that speak thus of original human nature; they most wretchedly misrepresent it, and as justly might they call light darkness, or good evil; for such a creature as this is no more a divine production, I had almost said, than God is a——.

Suppose an infinitely evil principle had form'd him, could he have turn'd him out of his hands a much worse creature than he is

repre-

a fœtus; or branches, leaves, flower, fruit or feed are in vegetables before they fpring.

Ar Powos Coon nuepon ourse. Aristot. Top. 5. 2. Homo est animalis suapte natura mansuetum.

שעשה עבש מעשבשה שוב אבציטעבי, אד פני מעוועבנים לבייוי.

Plut. in vit. Pomp.

Vix quisquam gratis malus est, aut si quem malitia propter se delectat, is ultra modum humanum processit: qui facit,

odio habet injuriam. Publius Mim.

Falso queritur de natura sua genus humanum, quod imbecilla, atque ævi brevis, sorte potius quam virtute regatur nam contra reputando, neque majus aliud neque præstabilius invenias; magisque naturæ hominum industriam quam vimaut tempus deesse. Sed dux atque imperator vitæ mortalium animus est: qui ubi ad gloriam via grassatur, abunde pollens, potensque et clarus est. — Sin captus pravis cupidinibus, ad inertiam et voluptates corporis pessum datus est, perniciosa libidine paullisper usus: ubi per socordiam vires, tempus, ingenium dessurere, naturæ insirmatas causatur: suam quisque culpam actores ad negotia transferunt. — Animus incorruptus, æternus, rector humani generis agit, atque habet cuncta, neque ipse habetur. Sallust. Bell. Jugurth, in initia.

represented? No; but let us take another view of him in his whole frame, view him in every light, and we shall find this notion of him very wrong. For as that admirable genius, Monsieur Paschal, observes, " it is of " dangerous consequence to represent to man " how near he is to the level of beafts, with-" out shewing him at the same time his great-" nefs. It is dangerous also to let him see his " greatness, without his meanness. It is yet " more dangerous to leave him ignorant of " either; but very beneficial that he should " be made sensible of both." It is certain, that human fociety is not to him as the company of enemies, nor are malice, rancour, and hatred of his species his natural tempers: self-approbation and applause depend not upon worrying his fellow-creatures, but upon the contrary, nor his own happiness upon their milery. On the contrary, we shall find no worse affection about him, even when deprav'd by a foolish education, evil examples, and fomething falfely call'd religion by fome, than felf-love: and tho' he is often angry, injurious, &c. yet much of life is pass'd away in offices of natural affection, friendship, relative and domestic usefulness. As we obferv'd before even our most flagitious malefactors would rather chuse to compass their ends, without their villanies than by them. After all the changes our nature has pass'd thro', and all the injuries done to it by parents,

238 Objections against God's PART III. rents, tutors, and others, there remains the public fense, and that of decorum and honestum in some degree, some reverence for the Deity, and some propensity to beneficence. And tho' our passions are a frequent cause of uneasiness to ourselves and others, being under bad government; yet it would not be well for us, to be without them; nay, without any one of them, fince they are all most wifely ballanc'd, like our antagonist muscles of the body, all together subservient to the necessities and pleasures of a rational being. Besides, we are endued with reason. that our passions may be govern'd aright to our own and others interest, by reflexion, confideration, and resolution: which are the things most wanting, and not the extinction of our passions and powers, and being supplied with fuch as are very different from them. What, should good-will, compassion, humanity, love of offspring, of our species, our country, reverence for the Deity, together with hunger and thirst, be all rooted up? For these are our natural appetites and pasfions, as appears from the nicest ferntiny into human nature in it's beginning. Are there private tempers, and are there not public affections, wifely adjusted (g)? So that taking

rente.

pare to that principle of gravitation, which perhaps extends to all bodies in the universe; but like the love of benevolence, increases

away either class of tempers, would destroy the natural balance, and be destructive to human nature: and any may perceive the consequence would be bad, of increasing or abating either, as the love of our species, of our country, our offspring; a change in these powerful springs of human conduct on either hand, by increasing or diminishing the natural biass would be sensibly felt immediately for the worse.

These are apprehensions of human nature form'd from experience and observation, and not from wrong politics, or a salse religion, those two grand engines by which wicked princes and priests vitiate both themselves and others; nor from philosophy so call'd, a third method of spreading salshood and vice in our world. This is a view of ourselves in both the greatness and meanness of our frame, which in the whole appears amiable and excellent, as an elegant piece of painting with it's florid and shady colours, or rather as the mundane

increases as the distance is diminished, and is strongest when bodies come to touch each other. Now this increase of attraction upon nearer approach is as necessary to the frame of the universe, as that there should be any attraction at all: for a general attraction equal in all distances, would by the contranety of such equal forces, put an end to all regularity of motion, and perhaps stop it altogether. The ingenious Mr. Hutchinson's inquiry concerning moral good and evil, p. 198, 199.

Videas etiam Euriphami Pythagorici, lib. de vita, inter

fagmenta quædam Pythagor. p. 7.

mundane fystem equipois'd with those two grand forces, the centripetal and centrifugal, by the latter whereof the feveral celestial orbs are restrain'd from flying all to the center of the fystem, and by the former they cannot fly off in tangent lines from their center to an infinite distance from one another. Just thus it is in man the microcofm; there are in him private and public affections, and the latter prevent his motions from centering in himfelf, the former prevent them from being diffused amongst the public. A most wife adjustment of the springs of motion, both in the material and moral world: that entertains the aftronomer in his calculations; this the moralist in his enquiries. Viewing any production superficially and partially, especially in it's meanest parts (b), or only in the most disadvantageous light, is very wrong, and cannot fail of affording a most imperfect idea of it. As just would it be to represent the human body univerfally, from what it is when alter'd for the worse, either by the vices of man, or the imprudencies of his physician; either when it is delug'd with a dropfy, or reduc'd to a skeleton by some disease, or when it is naturally all crooked and deformed, as Thersytes was: as it is to describe human nature,

<sup>(6)</sup> בא לב האשת בע דשוב אמדם סעהני מבאאטי בצומו דם סעה Quid naturale sit spectandum in his quæ bene secundum naturam se habent, non vero in depravatis.

nature, when debased to the last degree, by bad politicks, or false religion, or false philosophy and a vicious education. Wretched objects in our infirmaries and hospitals are not a proper standard for judging of the reason and health of the nation: vile creatures in our common jails are unfit to give us a true idea of national virtue : delirious enthufiafts are improper persons to afford us a just notion of true religion amongst a people. So neither are some pretended philosophers and others able to give us a right view of ourselves, consider'd as the productions of God: their schemes and systems tend only to fill us with abhorrence both of him and ourselves; but if we would value and love both our common parent, and ourselves his own offspring, we must lay our hand upon our breast, each for himself, descend into ourselves; and considering what we are originally, and whose originally, we shall find the account above given of our frame to be agreeable to the divine perfections, to experience and observation. The best philosophy, the Newtonian, is founded upon certain experiments: and the best anthropology must also be founded upon experience: these are sure soundations, but mere hypotheses are but guess-work, and therefore an uncertain basis for any superstructure. And let it be observ'd, of two errors concerning the present argument, that which

which is more favourable to human nature is the better, for it is univerfally allow'd to be better to err upon the charitable fide: this is more honourable to our maker, and more coinfortable to ourselves.

But do not mistake me; I am not in the least suspicious of the truth of the representation of human nature, which you have now had, it is not possible there should be fuch a fuspicion, fince the account is certainly taken from experience and observation: neither has it been afferted, that it is as good now as ever it was when it first of all came out of the hands of it's most perfect author: but, doubtless, the original human powers are not so very different now from what they once were, as they have been imagin'd to be; for a fmall temptation prov'd strong enough for the innocent creature, notwithstanding all his knowledge, rectitude, and felicity in his primæval condition. And certain it is, there is a great difference in natural conflitutions and dispositions, from what quarter soever they may arise, but most probably from a different crass of the bodily humours: so great is this difference, that in some the seeds of virtue almost seem innate, and to flourish without much care and culture; in others, as in a more unfit soil, they come forward flowly; and not this, but through much felfdenial and pains. Yet with none is there an utter

utter incapacity of virtue (b)? the greatest natural obstructions to it may be surmounted by proper endeavours, the very cafe with Socrates and many more. Persecutors, who like tygers can tear the bowels of the pregnant, and destroy the infant yet unborn, out of their mad religious zeal: yet they are naturally like other men, not being born with this furious passion; but their religion has extinguish'd nature, and transform'd them into very furies. The like observation holds good of other vicious creatures; they were made upright, but they have unmade themselves in a great measure: so Juvenal's (i) furly Jew, was corrupted by his religious mistakes to that degree, that he would not shew the road to the wandering traveller, or do him the smallest, R

(b) Συνεχως σεαυτω λεγων, Νυν επ' εμοι ες ιν, ενα εν ταυτη π ψυχη μηθεμια πουηρια η, μηθερπιθυμια, μηθε ολως ταραχή

715. M. Ant. 1. 8. p. 213.

Η φυσις εχ ετως συνεκερασε τω συγκριματι, ως μη εφεθαι περιορίζεν εαυτον, η τα εχυτε υφ εαυτω ποιειδαι. Λιαν γαρ ενδεχεται θειον ανθρα γενεδαι, η υπο μηθενος γεωριδημι. τετε μεμινησο αει, η ετι εχεινε, οτι εν ολιγισοις κειται το ενδαιμενως βιωσαι. η μη οτι απηλπισας διαλεχτικώ η ουπιος εσεδαι, δια τετο απογνως η ελευθερος, η α. δημων η κινωνιχος η ευπεθης Θεω. Μ. Ant. de feipfo, 1. 7. p. 195.

The fum of these two excellent passages of the emperor's is, that none is under a natural incapacity of becoming virtuous and happy; this is put within the power of all, whereas it is not possible for every one to become an orator, a poet,

or a philosopher.

cheapest favour, unless he was of his own religion: but it would be wrong to conclude, from this one instance, that all the twelve tribes; nay, that all nations were as ill-natur'd as he; for this would be as if any should conclude from Medea's unnatural cruelty to her own offspring, that the tender fex have no more pity, or natural affection, than that barbarous wretch had. Doubtless, neither the was born with this strange ferity of temper, nor the Jew with his narrow, felfish, unfociable disposition, no more are others with their feveral foibles, unaccountable humours, and vices. Confider, is any born with a lying or fwearing constitution, or with a natural love of gold or filver, any more than of tin, iron, lead, &c.? For to nature gold, iron, tin, and other minerals, are exactly alike. It is therefore plain, these foibles and irregular passions are adventitious to nature. Are they not?

EUSEB. Yes surely, since reason and revelation teach, that God is the giver of all good and perfect gifts, and of them only: to imagine any other should come from him, would be as if we should expect to gather grapes from thorns, sigs from thistles, or to draw bitter water from a sweet sountain. Therefore human nature as from him, must be all right, the there is a great difference between one constitution and another: all the

the bodily appetites, the affections irascible and concupifcible, hatred and love in all their different appearances, belonging to the human system, and derived from God, are all capable of fubserving noble ends, and are as fo many natural conatus's to impel us to proper action, when more excellent motives are not at hand to influence us, and even when these are not wanting: all given us by our great and good parent in heaven, all intended for good, and very subservient to our true interest, tho' by abuse or misapplication they produce nothing but pain and mifery: fo the best musical instrument, yet if not in order or tune, when touch'd, affords nothing but harsh and discordant sounds. Our animal passions, tho' good in themselves, become very evil, if rais'd too high, or funk too low, or unfitly indulg'd.

THEOPH. Therefore, the philosopher who endeavours to introduce into us an apathy, strives to maim nature, and injure it: and the mystic writers, who will not allow us to satisfy natural cravings, but advances such tenets, as in effect teach us, that God has given them us only to torment us; are just the same wretched repairers of our frame. The kind author of it design'd our happiness, both in the constitution of it, and in the provision he has made of agreeable objects; and still allows us a pleasant innocent enjoyment of

R 3

them

divine, are therefore both our and our maker's

enemies.

In fine, would but men carefully distinguish between human nature, before and after it is despoil'd of it's glory, by some wanton or wicked hand or other, and is lying in it's most unfightly ruins; they would admire it, and honour it's former: but the misfortune is, they consider it in it's worst condition. and without enquiring how it funk fo low, impute that to God, which does not belong to him, but to the vicious creature. they do not view it impartially, when they find it all distorted in the scandals to our species, and the horrid standards of moral deformity; for even in this wretched state there are some noble remains of the original frame in it's most horrid ruins: a Medea disapproves what she has done, and passes a dreadful fentence upon herself; nay, a cruel tyrant weeps over the misfortunes of Hecuba and Andromache, when only represented on the theatre, a plain proof there were some remains of the tender part of our frame, after he had spread destruction amongst his Phercean vassals. Humanity, that excellent part of us, is not fo foon extinguish'd (k) as may be supposed;

<sup>(</sup>k) Nemo repente fuit turpissimus. — Juv. Sat. 2. Sunt quædam vitiorum elementa, his protinus illos Imbuit, et cogit minimas ediscere sordes.

many unnatural arts must be learn'd and practis'd, and many vile courfes be taken up and purfued, before it be put off; and after all, it is too deep rooted in us, to be quite extirpated. And you may apply this observation to that part of us relating to our maker: the impious wretch cannot arrive all at once at an accurfed malignity against him, but he must practise much unnatural, painful violence upon himself; and when he has done his worst, uneasy suspicions, and terrible foreboding fears of an after-vengeance remain. But enough has been offer'd, in vindication of the divine perfections in the formation of man. The men who have put us upon all this labour, are wretched philosophers, and mistaken theologues (1): and you may obferve, that fad representations of God, and of his works, particularly of man, go together in atheistic philosophy, and some party theological fystems: it is a thousand pities, that they should tally to one another so exactly; but the fact is too plain to be denied, and too bad to be justified. Compare the Leviathan, and some other writings together, and you will find a gloomy fimilitude. I would draw the comparison for you, had I not insisted so long upon your last objection; therefore ex-

<sup>(1)</sup> Quid, quæso, mi Dorpi, hisce theologis faciamus, aut quid preceris, nisi forte sidelem medicum, qui cerebro medeatur. Erasm. ad Dorp.

cuse me from it at present. And there may be some scriptural difficulties, which you cannot easily surmount; but I must not for the same reason insist upon them; and therefore shall refer you to the perusal of such pieces (m) as may afford you full satisfaction upon this head. Have you any more objections against the moral character of God?

(m) Mr. Taylor's Scripture doctrine of original fin, and his defences of it.



## OBJECTION. IV.

All religious Sects represent God as an immoral Being.

monamongstatheistical men (n), and taken from that revelation, which we believe God has given of his own nature and perfections. "It is certain, it is not at all "confistent with a good moral character amongst us, to be not only angry, but full of hatred and rancour, sury and vengeance against any, tho ever so injurious to us: this is a diabolical, and not a divine temper. But thus, say they, is God represented, not only by divines, who may very positive felf, who certainly knows himself the best, and can therefore give the truest account

<sup>(</sup>n) Quomodo Christiani dicunt, Deum suum esse patientem et avagination? Nihil iracundius, nihil hoc surore præsentius: ne modico quidem spatio, indignationem suam deserre potuit? Hier, lib. 3. in Habac. c. 3.

Objections again God's PART III. of himself; for he tells us, not only that " he is very angry now and then, but fu-" rious, and fatiating his direful vengeance " upon his enemies, nay, appropriating ven-" geance to himself, claiming it as his sole " prerogative, and exercifing it even for ever. "Therefore, either this is his own account of himself, and therefore a true, but a " horrid one; or it is not his own, but forged, and therefore the revelation which " characterizes him in this horrid manner, is a forgery and imposture. Let Christians take which conclusion they like better, ei-" ther is bad enough; if they chuse the " former, their God will be a wretched one, worse than none by much; if the latter, " the revelation they value fo much, will turn out an ill-devised fable." This is their objection against the divine moral character in general, and against that most amiable and glorious branch of it in particular, viz. his ineffable goodness. What answer shall we return to it, that may at once vindicate both the divine moral character, and the divine revelation, both which are very dear unto us? THEOPH. Our atheistical adversaries may

fancy they have put their objection in a strong light, and that it may prove a troublesome one to us: but if they think so, they are much mistaken. We have demonstrated, that God is not ill-natured, rancorous, spiteful, &c.

All

All ill-natur'd paffions arise from want and weakness, not indeed necessarily, but by an abuse of liberty or free agency: but there is neither want or impotence in God, and therefore there cannot be in him any malevolent dispositions. It is just as true, that he hears, fees, handles, finells, and walks exactly as we do, as it is, that he is angry, peevish, spiteful, fullen, implacable, as weak and ill-natur'd men are. It is certain too, that in those facred writings, out of which this objection is taken, and wherein some expressions are rack'd and tortur'd, to make them fignify fomewhat quite contrary to their real fense; there are the most moving and tender passages concerning the bowels, mercies, paternal affection, and the most extensive and impartial benevolence of God towards men univerfally. that can be met with any where.

The truth is, as God is of a most perfect moral character, he must have an utter aversion to all vice: as the most happy, and the most spiritual being, therefore his aversion to vice must be without sudden transports and inward perturbations: as the moral rector of the world, he will inslict such punishments, for nature, degree, and duration, as shall be requisite to the great ends of his government, his own honour, and the good of the whole. He is what all magistrates in their several capacities should be, legum similis, free from

fond

With regard to punishment; as it is inflicted by him only upon proper subjects, in a sit proportion both of degree and duration (m), and for the best ends, it must therefore be sit in itself, and more eligible than the impunity of the guilty; and consequently, so far must be pleasing to him. And certainly the absolute impunity of the guilty would be unbecoming an all-persect being; for as on one hand, not to be able to bear with an offending creature would bewray both want of patience,

<sup>(</sup>m) Concerning the duration of future punishment, fee Archbishop Tillotson, and Mr. Scott's Sermons in defence of all religion, &c. Vol. II. Serm XVII, XVIII.

tience, and a mean impotence of mind; fo, on the other hand, to take no notice of maleconduct, at any time, would discover in any superior, and much more in the supreme governor, an unjustifiable indifference and neglect of right and order, and a wretched stupidity as to the interest of the whole community. Suppose Xenophon had faid of his hero Cyrus, that he was either so tender or stupid, that he could not fo much as hear of any punishment being inflicted upon any whatever, and therefore left all to do as they pleas'd, without giving the last check; it is impossible, that even the Attic muse, with all her embellishments of language, could make this part of his character look well. The application is easy. God at once pities and punishes sinners, taking no pleasure therein, but as it is fit; and thus shews his just concern for the honour of his government, and the good of his subjects in general. And this kind, as well as just concern discover'd in corrections and punishments, is what is stil'd in holy writ his anger, fury, and vengeance, in accommodation to our low and weak apprehension, and for our warning: and very fit it was, to cloath this concern in ardentibus verbis, as some stile some expressions of Virgil, since they who are in the greatest danger from this awful divine concern, and steady resolution to execute impartial justice, are generally the most

most stupid and sool-hardy. Thus a prudent parent sometimes assumes an air of greater severity than he is conscious of, to excite the stubborn child to that which cool reason and calm persuasion would not influence him to; and such a method is not uncommon with the most impartial magistrate, before unrelenting malesactors. God is pure unmixt reason, and therefore his love must be the more valuable, because without any transport; and his displeasure the more terrible, because without passionate surv.

Now it is plain, there is no force in this objection against the divine moral character. Athists, as well as all others, have reason indeed to think honourably of him, to value his favour above all things, and dread his displeasure greatly. May our apprehensions of him be exalted, and all our tempers and conduct towards him be sit and just. May the evil we feel, or fear, prevent suture and darable ills. And may our notions of human nature be right, and our behaviour worthy it's dignity, and agreeable to it's perfect author.

Then indulge me some hope, that you will shew us what are these sit tempers and behaviour towards God, in particular. My request is very reasonable; for as light from it's great fountain in the material world, is attended

tended with a pleasing warmth; so should all our light from the fountain and father of lights, in the intellectual and moral world. be accompanied with a divine fervour, or made to subserve some useful purpose: the great author of the material system created light, both folar and lunar, and even the twinkling light of the stars for our use: and doubtless he who is the all-perfect author of the intellectual and moral system too, has given light, not only for our entertainment, but for practice: and the path of the virtuous is as the shining light, which shines more and more to a perfect day. We are not only to stand gazing at the light, whether natural or moral; but to use it aright, or work while it is day. But do not many who confider the most important subjects in theology (n), and who

(\*) Non possum legere Cic. de Senect. de Amicit. de Offic. de Tusc. Quæst. quin aliquoties exosculer codicem et venere illud sanctum pectus, asslatum cœlesti numine. Contra, cum hos quosdam recentiores lego de Repub. Oeconom. aut Ethic. præcipientes; Deum immortalem! Quam frigent præ illis. Imo quam non videntur sentire quod scribant!

Misa cooisny osis an auto cooos. Euripid.

Οι μοι, φιλοσοφοίς; αλλά τες τε φιλοσοφες

EV TOIS D'EPYDIS OPPONENTAS EUPISKO MONOU.

Anaxipp, apud Athenæum.

Odi sophistam qui non sibi sapit.

Heu me, tu philosopharis; at ego philosophos

Verbis tantum sapere animadverto:

Gerendis autem rebus, dementes perspicio.

Nonne hoc dici nimis verè de theologis multis possit ?
Antiquorum

who have flruck out new light, treat them as exercises of our understanding only, in a mere speculative manner, as mathematicians often This method of handdo the mathematicks. ling them would be very right, were we endow'd only with understanding, and no free agency and affections: but as our frame is not thus constituted, this method must be wrong, it being not adapted to our entire frame, and every performance of this kind must be very defective. Just apprehensions of the divine perfections are of as great importance to religion, as a good foundation is to the superstructure, or a good and well-spread root to any vegetable: but as a foundation, tho' ever fo firm, but no superstructure; and a root, tho' ever fo good, and no branches or fruit, are of no value: So are the most elaborate disquisitions upon the most excellent subjects, whether moral or theological, if they begin and terminate in mere speculation. therefore effential to the compleating what you have already done upon this fubject, to direct us how we are to apply all to the interest of virtue and religion. Nay, this is necessary to even a clear and comprehensive understanding of the subject itself: for as no branch of science can be clearly comprehended without

Antiquorum libros volvant, helluentur, acerrime disputent, exangues scholasticos in sanguinem et succum vertant, criticos devorent omnes, scripturiant concientur, tamen non vere probi sunt.

without a proper turn of mind or genius for it, so is it with this branch (0) of knowledge in particular; a divine subject requires a divine temper, and cannot be well understood without it, any more than mathematicks can be learn'd to purpose, without a mathematical genius. Is it not so? And is not my request very reasonable?

THEOPH. It is indeed, I must own (p). Of the two, it is infinitely better to have the divine tempers, and but a little speculative knowledge, than a large stock of knowledge, and very little, or nothing, of a divine virtuous character: the difference is so great, that there is no comparison indeed between the one and the other. But then you know the temper of the present age, that it runs eagerly after speculation, and is very indifferent, if not averse to labours of a practical tendency. Yet even this is an argument against complying with this temper, and for being somewhat unfashionable in this our performance: the greater this melancholy reluctance is, the greater should the opposition be against it, lest it should terminate at last,

(a) Ut solem videas oculis, sieri debes solaris: ut divinum aspicias pulchritudinem, demittemateriam, demitte sensum, et Deum qualis sit videbis. Ficinus in Comment. Plot. c. 7.

Pythagor. apud Stob. Serm. 80.

<sup>(</sup>ρ) Κενος εκωνός φιλοσοφε λογος υφ ε μηθεν ανθρωπε παθος δεραπευεται, ωσπερ γας ιατρικής εκ οφελός μη τας νόσες εκβαλλεσης από των σωματών, ετως εθε φιλοσοφιας ω με το της ψυχης κακον εκβαλλη.

Thus Euphranor a painter, having tir'd his imagination in drawing Neptune to the life, could not raise it again, that he might represent Jupiter. Val. Max. 8. 11.

Φιλοσοφία ετί ζωης ανθρωσίνης Καθαρσίς η τελεωτής καθαρσίς μεν από της υλίκης αλογίας η τε θνητέθες τωματός τελειότης δε της οικείας ευζωίας αναληψίς, προς την θείαν ων μυίωσιν επαναγήσα ταυτά τε πεφυκέν αρετή η αλήθεια καθλίτα απέργαζεδαί η μεν την αμετρίαν των παθων εξορίζεσα

η δε το θωου είδος, ευρυώς εχεσα, προσκτωμενη. Hieroc. in Pythag.

<sup>(</sup>q) One remarkable instance of this nature is Bernard Ochin, the founder and first patriarch of the Capucine Order, who left one, then another order, and became a Jew, then a Turk, and at last an Atheist, and wrote a furious invective against the three grand impostors, as he stilled Moses, Christ, and Mahomet. Sir Kenelm Digby's Annot. &c. p. 89.

OBJ. III. Moral character answer'd. 259 attempt something this way, having not only reason on my side, but this encouragement too, that it will be acceptable to the wise and virtuous part of mankind, who will take well what is meant well, tho' it should not be well executed.



S 2

PART

# PART IV.

COROLLARIES of the most useful kind, from the preceding demonfration of the being and attributes of God.

### COROLLARY L

T being most evident, that there is one only being most perfect in all regards, natural and moral; they must be without excuse (r), who pretend they neither do, nor can believe the existence of God.

The

<sup>(</sup>r) Atheism, in the opinion of several of the antient heathens, was such astonishing folly, that they pronounc'd it's abettors to be out of their wits, mad men, &c. All men that have reason believe there is a God. Plut. de Homero.

The variety and perspicuity attending this evidence renders Atheisin of all kinds intolerable folly, and all Atheists utterly inexcusable. For should the Atheist alledge, that he will believe nothing but what he does or may see; this is no excuse, because false, since he believes many things he has not seen, nor can see, as his atoms fortuitously jumbling together, and forming a world.

Should he say, it is possible there may be no God, and therefore he may be in the right, and we in the wrong: he might as well alledge, that 2 and 2 may not possibly be 4, and therefore we may be mistaken in believing it. For it is as impossible, that there should be an effect without a cause, or an eternal succession of dependent causes, without a felf-existent being, as that 2 + 2 = 3, or = 3.

He may think, that there is not demonfiration against him, and therefore that he is excusable. But he might as well say, there

This is so evident, that he who denies it can scarce be thought to be in his right mind. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib 2 Orat in Catalin. tertia. Xenophon. de Fact. Socratis. Eurip. in Heraclid. A. Gell. 1. 17. c. 1. Cic. de legib. lib. 2. p. 322. Tuse. Qual. lib. 4. The expressions of these authors concerning the folly, or rather madness of Atheism are to strong, that they shew us they almost wanted words to signify their attonishment at it, and their contempt of Atheists. With them it is a stopor, and madness, and the Atheist a monster.

Απορωίτες ποτερού δει της Θευς τιμαν, η της γονες αγαπαν, 8 8, κολασεως δεονται. Arith. I op. 1. 1. cap. 9.

is no demonstration in mathematicks, since no mathematical demonstration is plainer and stronger than the demonstration of the being and persections of God. And suppose there were not demonstration of them, but probable proof; it is upon such evidence as this he believes many things, as the existence heretofore of Epicurus, Lucretius, Vanini, Hobbs, Spinoza, &c. Let him but compare his evidence against, and our's for the being of God impartially, and he will find our's much superior, in perspicuity, sulness, and every property of good evidence.

Should he object, that weak arguments have been offer'd, to perfuade him to a belief of the being of God, such as are sit to perfuade only the childish and credulous: we grant it; but then the demonstration a priori and a posteriori, is not a puerile argument, but worthy the study of an Epicurus, or any

of the atheistic tribe.

Should he perfift in it, that the proof of this is so weak, that there have been in all ages Atheists, even of considerable learning, as Diagoras, Democritus, Protagoras, Epicurus, &c. amongst the antients; and Hobbs, Vanini, Spinoza, &c. amongst the moderns: he must understand some were only reputed, not real Atheists, such as could not believe the vulgar errors of the poets, the populace, the priests and politicians concerning their Gods, and could not comply

comply with the establish'd fooleries in reli-This was the case with Anaxagoras; Socrates, and many others of old; and with some lately in Christian countries. Some amongst, men of superior learning, parts, and virtue, have been thus treated of late by bigots. As for real Atheifts; he who thinks favourably of them, should consider it is a poor reason for embracing any opinion, because some even learned men have thought fit to take it up and defend it, fince it is very true which Tully (s) observes, that there is no tenet fo abfurd, but some philosopher or other has afferted and defended it as well as he could. Some of them faid a thing might be and not be at the same time: the stoicks would not allow, that we are fure of our own existence; and some learned men would not grant fnow is white. Let not the Atheist boast of the learning and penetration of his party: Plato (t) affures us the Atheists of his S 4 time

(1) Nihil tam absurdum quod non dixerit aliquis philosophorum. De Nat. Deor. 1. 3.

צוקו לב דוניבה סו מדסו דב בנולב צבלמו סמסו דם מעדם בוענו צל נוח

Bras. Aristot. Metaphy. lib. 4. c. 4.

Tho' philosophers and theologues, of all men, are particubilly obliged to affert nothing but what they understand, and can conceive possible; yet they are the only men in the world perhaps who have talk'd and writ the greatest nonsense; infomuch, that there is scarce any thing so absurd, but some or other have faid it : witness several philosphers of the Ariflotelian tribe, and feveral theologues, as most of the schoolmen and many others.

(1) Plato de Legib. lib. 10.

time were conceited ill-manner'd men, and the cause of their Atheism was ignorance under the semblance of wisdom. Of Epicurus in particular (u), we are told, that he was a man of no education or learning, rude, of no acumen, no authority, nor wit. And if we may judge of our modern atheistic authors by their writings, we must have a mean opinion of their learning, as well as their politeness; for what are our atheistic composures but rude attacks upon religion, low raillery, mean jests, ill-natur'd and the coarest satire, instead of reason, argument, fine wit, and fine writing? Once more, the Atheist should not forget, that his party, with all their wit and learning, had never any full and lafting persuasion of the truth of their own philosophic system; at least, it does not appear there was such a belief amongst them in general, and perhaps in any one particular person. True, many have profess'd an atheistic perfuation (x), and every man knows his own fentiments.

(ii) Tullius de Nat. Deor. lib z.

<sup>(</sup>x) It is observable of the antient reputed Atheils, either that they were only reputed Athersts for their disbelief of prevailing vulgar religious errors, and their contempt of the religious fopperies of their countrymen; or that most of them, if not all, recanted their atheittical notions: the former feems to have been the case with Diagoras of Melos, from his burning an Hercules of wood in a icoffing humour, faying, courage, Hercules; you must undergo this one labour more, befides the twelve that Eurifibeus impos'd upon you. Thus Dianyfius,

sentiments the best: but it is very questionable, whether their belief was agreeable to their profession, because the most ingenious of the party have declar'd they never had a firm atheistic persuasion for any time, but were apt to suspect there is a God, even then, when they endeavour'd to destroy all belief of his existence, both in themselves and others. In fine, if the Atheist be for determining whether there be a God or no, by the number, learning, and penetration of the two opposite parties, theistical and atheistical, there is not the least question but it would be determined

Dionysius, another reputed Atheist, despoil'd Jupiter of his robe ponderous with gold and gems, telling him, it was not a proper garment for him in hot weather and a hot climate; and took off Esculapius's golden beard, alledging that the son should be beardless, since his father Apollo was so. What are these but instances of just contempt of the heathen idolatry, and of nothing else? As for Diagoras, the most famous Atheist of old; we are told, he begun his poems with this exordium, that all things are rul'd by the supreme Deity. Theodorus another, furnam'd Atheos, we are inform'd by Laertius, publish'd a book de Diis, and not a contemptible one, which he had feen. Euemerus, a third of the atheistical tribe, as Theophilus of Antioch affures us, defended the unity of God. Aristotle too had often express'd himself too much in favour of Atheism, or was so understood; however, Ca-lius Rhadiginus saith, he earnestly implor'd at his death the mercy of the first cause. So Numa Pompilius, the great founder of the old Roman idolatrous religion, as both Pliny and Plutareb relate, at last retracted all, and wrote a book against his own religious institutions, which was not found till above 530 years after his death, and burnt by the order of the senate. Many other instances of this nature might be added.

termin'd in favour of the former. He has almost all the world against him, learned and unlearned; and fince this is the case, he should be very fure he alone is in the right, because there is a kind of reverence due to the judgment of mankind; and no wife man will contradict it, but upon demonstrative evidence, nor always even upon this either.

The Atheist may fancy to excuse himself, from the great variety and difference of fentiments there is concerning God. But he knows that various opinions about any one thing are no argument against the thing itself: he is not ignorant, that his own philosophic writers are not agreed about the original formation of the universe; but yet, an universe there was, is, and will be, tho' they should never agree in their hypotheses concerning it. In like manner, there was, is, and will be a God, let there be ever fo various, different, and abfurd opinions concerning him amongst mankind.

In omnium animis deorum notionem impressit ipsa natura; quæ est enim gens aut quod genus hominum quod non habet fine doctrina, anticipationem quandam deorum, quam appellat monnimo Epicurus, id est, anteceptam animo rei quandam informationem, fine qua nec intelligi quidquam, nec quæri, nec disputari possit. Cic. de Nat. Deor. 1. 1.

Deos esse inter alia sic colligimus, quod omnibus de Dis insita est, nec ulla gens uspiam est, adeò contra leges, moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat. Senec. Ep. 17.

Παντες αδιδάκτες εναι Θεοντι πεπεισμέδα, η προς τέτο etgopar, हमें क्यार मह offer कार्या कार्या कार कार्य के कार में कार में कार में · Luxas προς αυτο ωσπερ οιμαι προς το φως τα βλεποντα. lulian. mankind. Difference of opinion about the existence or nature of things proves nothing against either, otherwise this would prove against the existence of every thing, since there is scarce any one thing, but there is diversity of sentiment relating to it. What so visible in the material world, as the sun; and yet what different sentiments have there been concerning it's magnitude, motion, and some other properties?

Does the Atheist say, there is no God or no providence, which is much the same in effect, because impiety prospers, and virtue is persecuted? Both are consistent with the divine persections, as it has been provid at

large.

Will he argue for his gloomy hypothesis, from the creation which he imagines he could have contriv'd better himself? But this ill opinion of his concerning the creation is owing to his too good opinion of himfelf, and his ignorance of nature. The fite and motions of the celestial bodies are such, that the best aftronomers own they are not to be alter'd for the better. And as to our globe; it is admirable contrivance, which has made it's axis always parallel to itself, and fitly inclin'd to a plain going through the fun's center: hence is it, that the earth is habitable almost every where, and they in 45 degrees of latitude have more fun than had it stood always in the æquator.

The fpheroidal form of the earth is the most commodious, because by this means, together with it's position, the inhabitants of it have a proper degree of the fun's heat. A most admirable phænomenon is gravity (y), by which all bodies attract univerfally, according to the squares of their distances: it is this which holds the feveral orbs of the whole fystem from flying off to an immense distance from one another, in their rapid rotations round their own axes, and round the common center: it is this which is the fpring of all the regular and harmonious motions in the inanimate world; and as it is not proportional to the furfaces, but the folid content of bodies. it consequently is not owing to mere motion originally impress'd on matter, but to something penetrating the fubstance of bodies; and is a constant proof, not only that the universe was made, but is preferv'd and govern'd by an intelligent being: it is by this amazing contrivance the particles of matter cohere, and are

<sup>(</sup>y) The uniform principle of gravity preserves at once the planets in their orbits, gives cohesion to the parts of each gl be, and stability to mountains, hills, and artificial structures; it raises the sea in tides, and finks them again, and restrains them in their channels; it drains the earth of superfluous moisture, by rivers; it raises the vapours by it's in-Avence on the air, and brings them down again in rains; it gives an uniform pressure to our atmosphere, necessary to our bodies in general, and more especially to inspiration in breathing; and furnishes us with an universal movement, capable of being applied in innumerable engines. Inquiry concerning beauty, &c. p. 63.

not to be separated but by force. The mountainous parts of the globe, tho' deem'd excrescencies and deformities, are as natural alembicks to distil great quantities of water for us, remora's to stop the flying clouds, and make them burst and unburthen themselves, the best ground for the production of many medicinal herbs, ferve as boundaries to territories national and provincial, and together with dales afford the most delightful profpects: ignivomous mountains are natural spiracles, which give vent to the internal conflagrations, which otherwise would tear the globe in pieces. But the present pleasant subject must be dismiss'd, with this remark of one (2) of the antients, that " those so-" phists or cavillers are much to blame, who " being unable to penetrate into the works

(z) Accusandi, mea sententia, hic sunt sophistæ, qui cum nondum invenire neque exponere opera naturæ queant, eam inertia atque inscitia condemnant. Galen, de usu part.

Atheists and infidels are the most forward of all men to carp at nature and providence; may, the only fault-finders in thefe two respects, and yet the most improper men in the world for the purpose, in regard they have shewn they had not much penetration, or learning to qualify them for it. This is the opinion of the antient fages among the Greeks and Romans concerning them: in their apprehension there is no more difference between the light of a glow-worm, and that of the fun, than there was between them and their adversaries, betwixt Diagoras and Pythagoras, between Theodorus Atheos and Theophrasius, between Bion and Chilon, or Epicurus and Epicharmus, or Pherecides and Parmenides; to fay nothing of Socrates, Plato, Ariftotle, Zeno, Xenocrates, Demetrius, Cleanthes, " of nature, condemn her for ignorance, when the ignorance to be blam'd is their

" own only."

Let not the Atheist justify himself, by say, ing, that as fingular as he appears to the world, a great part of mankind are really, tho' not professedly, of his opinions concerning God and Religion; fince actions are the furest proof of men's sentiments, and their behaviour is such, as if they believ'd as he does: fuch is the behaviour, not only of the illiterate vulgar, and rude populace, the barbarous and heathen nations; but even of the polite and learned; laity and clergy, even the most honourable and dignified.-True indeed is this, which he alledges concerning the behaviour of many; and, alas, pudet hec opprobria nobis, &c. This is the grand support of atheism (a) and prophaneness, our atheistical

unthes, Democritus, Diogenes, Melissus, and many more, who were more their superiors in reason and literature than

Quantum lenta folent inter viburna cupressi.

Virg. Eclog. 1.

The character of our modern Atheists, scepticks and infi-

dels will be given hereafter.

(a) Miratus fæpe fui, dicit Atheus perquam notus, scilicet Spinoza, quod homines qui se Christianam religionem prosteri jactant, hoc est, amorem, gaudium, pacem, continentiam, et erga omnes sidem, plusquam iniquo animo certarent, et acerbissimum in invicem odium quotidie exercerent, ita ut sacilius ex his, quam illis sides uninscujusque noscatur; jamdudum enim res eo pervenit, ut neminem fere, quisnam sit, num scilicet Christianus, Turca, Judæus, vel Ethinicus, noscere possis, nisi ex corporis externo habitu et cultu, vel quod hanc aut illam

illam ecclesiam frequentat, vel denique quod huic aut illi opinioni addictus est, et in verbo alicujus magistri jurare solet. Caterum vita eadem omnibus est. Hujus igitur mali causam quarens, &c. Spinoza in Tract. Theolog. Polit.

(b) Quicunque jesuitæ vel ecclesiastici Romæ in honoribus

vivunt, Athei. Scaligerana, p. 126.

<sup>(</sup>ε) Μισω σωφιςην ος ις εκ αυτω σορως. Euripid.

one hand lifted up towards heaven in devotion (d), and the other pilfering all it can come at; all the conclusion that can be fairly drawn is this, either that they do not believe as they pretend, or do not act according to their own persuasion. I would ask the Atheist, suppose in any imminent danger (e) from thunder and lightning, or an earthquake, he should invoke the Deity, and implore his affiftance, would it therefore follow, that there is one? Or, should he be in profession an Atheist, but in practice a Theift, would it follow from this inconfistency between his profession and practice, that there is a God? He would deny the consequence: so we deny his conclusion from the glaring inconsistency between the profession and practices of many Christians, Theists, or any whatever.

Let not the Athift fay, Theism is the contrivance of priests or politicians. Not of priests: it has been observ'd of this body of

men,

(d) As Sinon, Quod te per superos, et conscia numina veri, Per, fi qua est, quæ restat adhuc mortalibus usquam Intemerata fides, oro; miserere laborum

Tantorum, miserere animi non digna ferentis. Virg. Æn. l. z. (e) The very case with Bion of Boristhenes, concerning whom Lacrtius in his life relates, that he was in health so confirm'd an Atheist, that he flatly denied there was a God : but when old, and struck with some uncommon disease, he then heartily repented of all his impiety. Concerning which change in the Atheilt's sentiments, Laertius very well observes what a fool he was, who could believe a God when he stood in some eminent need of him, and that there was none when that was not his case, as if God should be, or not be, as he pleas'd. Laert, in vita Bion, p. 144.

men, that they are very awkard and bungling contrivers: however, this is certain, if religion be their own contrivance, many of them have done much to disparage, and render it fruitless to themselves. It is therefore not likely to be their invention. And there is abundant reason against ascribing it to politicians, as their project. Not only subjects, but kings and emperors cannot help believing it, as Caligula, who hid himself when it thunder'd, and Tiberius (f), who complain'd to the

(f) It is an observation which generally holds good, which the heathen philosophers made, tantum metuunt quantum notent, men's sears are proportionable to their guilt; and again, dat pænas quisquis expectat, quisquis autem meruit expectat, offenders really suffer punishment, who live under expectation of it; and whoever deserves it, expects it. Senec. Ep. 105. It is not easy to describe the torment guilty wretches endure.

Quos dira conscia facti
Mens habet amonitos. Juven.

Both Plato and Cicero affirm, that the most vicious and impious wretches near death are terribly tormented with the consciousness of their guilt, and with inward sears of an after-reckoning, and begin bitterly to repent of their past life. Plato de Repub. 1. 1. p. 532. Cic. de Divin. 1. 1. p. 251. And Laertius relates of Bion before-mention'd, that when his last illness grew upon him, he was fadly afraid of dying, tho' he had denied the Gods, despised their temples, derided their worshippers, and never once own'd that he had done amiss: yet at last he would have been glad to have endur'd any thing rather than have died. Laert in vita Bion.

Yet this was the man who did his utmost to teach and propagate Atheism in the world, tho' without the success he desir'd; for when at last he had not so much as one pupil to attend his atheistic lectures, that he might not seem to be wholly deserted, and fallen under universal contempt, he bited a crew of mercenary seamen to follow him in the habit of scholars, and attend him him through the chief streets of Borishbenes as his disciples. Laert ibid.

the senate of the ictus and laniatus, the inward flings and remorfes of conscience which he felt. Notwithstanding the giddiness of the heads of many princes in their high flations, and the depravity of their morals; they are frequently compell'd to believe with the peafant the existence of a God of most impartial righteousness. This belief still remains in modern courts and palaces, amidit all the arts of luxury and debauchery there, and probably will remain always in perfons of the most exalted stations on earth, fince men more witty and wicked scarce can ever appear upon thrones, and about them, than have appear'd in times past. This pretence then of religion being a state or churchcontrivance is one mean subterfuge of the Atheist amongst the rest. Upon the whole, Atheism is a most unreasonable, as well as a most melancholy scheme, contrary to all reason, destructive of all comfort. And that it may further appear fo, consider the Atheist's creed.

#### The ATHEIST'S CREED.

" I believe there neither is, nor was, nor were will be a God: but that chance is the cause of all: that matter was without a cause, and all it's motion without a mover:

This is the Atheist's real belief, if his sentiments and expressions (g) agree: a most absurd one, just as if one should imagine herbs to move up and down a room (b), and then to fall into the most exact order of the most regular.

" argument, and to the common fense of all

" mankind."

(g) But it is supposed by many, that they do not agree. Mentiuntur qui dicunt se sentire non esse Deum, nam etsi tibi affirment interdiu, noctu tamen et sibi dubitant. Senec.

(b) The simile the great Kepler's confort made, upon his representing to her the absurd Epicurean scheme concerning the origin of the universe.

regular fallad; or the letters of the alphabet shaken like dice in a box, and then to be thrown out in that order, as to form the annals of Ennius. Yet this is the man who pretends (i) to be a scholar, a philosopher, a free-thinker, a wit, and one who will admit nothing without even demonstration. Surely, not learning, not philosophy, not wit, reafon and good nature, but ignorance, stupidity and ill-nature have made him credulous to

the

(i) Yet he has the least reason for making any such pretence of all men. Men of atheistical principles are thus describ'd by the politest writer this or any other age produc'd, the most ingenious Mr. Addison. It is my opinion the free-thinkers for atheistic tribe) should be treated as a set of poor ignorant creatures, that have not sense enough to discover the excellency of religion; it being evident those men are no witches, nor likely to be guilty of any deep defign, who proclaim aloud to the world, that they have less motives of honesy than the rest of their fellow-subjects. The free thinker lays himself under the dilemma, I will not say of being a fool or knave, but of incurring the contempt or deteflation of mankind. There is fomething fo ridiculous and perverse in this kind of zealots, that one does not know how to fet them out in their proper colours. They are a fort of gamesters who are eternally upon the fret, tho' they play for nothing. They are perpetually teizing their friends to come over to them, tho' at the same time they allow that neither of them shall get any thing by the bargain. In fhort, the zeal of spreading Atheism is, if possible, more absurd than Atheism itself. They are wedded to opinions full of contradiction and impoliibility; and at the same time look upon the smallest difficulty in an afticle of faith, as a sufficient reason for rejecting it.-Let me therefore advise this generation of wranglers, for their own and the public good, to act at least so consistently with themselves, as not to burn with zeal for irreligion, and with bigotry for nonsense. Their pretension to be free-thinkers is no other than rakes have to be free-livers, and favages to be

the last degree: and he who can think as well as talk thus, tho' he can contemn his maker, despise his neighbours as the dupes of politicians or priests, and play many atheistic tricks; should by no means pretend either to learning or free-thinking, but much rather learn the first principles of knowledge.

free-men; that is, they can think whatever they have a mind to, and give themselves up to whatever conceit the extravagancy of their inclinations, or their fancy can suggest.——deduction, coherence, consistence, and all the rules of reason they disdain.—They are a set of dry, joyless, dull sellows, who want capacities and talents to make a sigure: poor men, certainly rather blockheads than Atheists, as incapable of writing an heroic poem as making a servent prayer.

Mr. Addison.



T 3

CO-

# COROLLARY

Atheism is a very uncomfortable, as well as an unreasonable scheme.

THERE is no comparison between his and our's, in point of the relief each affords. Grant he is not haunted with our childish fears, as he calls them, and our ghostly horrors: neither is he entertain'd with our chimerical hopes and joys, as he is pleas'd to stile them; which are an over-balance to all our fears and forrows. And suppose our's is a fool's paradife only, yet a paradife it is to us, which renders our present condition much more eligible than his, as an atheistic nobleman ingenuously own'd. Our present condition is better than his every way, as we are free from those uneasy suspicions of the existence of a Deity, and of an after-reckoning, which now and then trouble him whether he will or no: besides, our superstition, to speak

COR. II. the great end of true theology. 279 in atheistic language, is better for the body, estate, reputation, and every present interest,

whether personal or social, than his Atheism

can be.

And with reference to futurity, we have infinitely the advantage of him. Suppose him to be in the right, and us in the wrong, yet we run no hazard, and shall sustain no loss, unless it be of some little gratifications for the present, pernicious nevertheless to body and estate; or of some small advantages, which' yet are sufficiently recompens'd to us by our religion. And at last, should we be quite annihilated, he and we shall be in the same condition, he unable to deride us for our credulity and superstition, and we to blame ourselves for them. But should he prove after all to be mistaken, as certainly he must be, there will be an infinitely wide difference between his after-condition and our's, as great as there is between happiness compleat, and mifery absolute, both at present above comprehension and perfect description. Were it then but a moot-point whether there be a God or no, yet Atheism would be great imprudence: were religion nothing from first to last here but forrow and trouble, yet upon a probability of happiness hereafter, it would be our undoubted wisdom to mind it in good earnest: were irreligion at present nothing but mirth and pleasure, yet upon the least

fuspicion of misery succeeding hereafter, it would be prudence to thun it carefully, fince it is a dictate of reason that present satisfaction must be rejected, that will or may terminate in great misery; as present uneafiness should be submitted to, that will be recompenc'd abundantly with future ease and enjoyment.

But that this comparison between our prefent and future condition, and that of the Atheist's, may not be misunderstood; it should be remark'd, that it proceeds upon a double supposition, viz. that our apprehenfions of God, and our behaviour towards him are right: otherwise the difference between his and our's may prove very small, or none at all. Certainly, as to time present, he may have the advantage, if our apprehensions of God are gloomy: for as no God is better in itself than one supposed to be imperfect in the moral character (k), as no name is better than a bad one, so none is better to us than fuch an one, A Deity supposed to be capricious or malevolent, regardless of the happi-

Ουκ αμείνου ην Γαλατά:ς εκείνοις κ Σκυθαίς το παραπαν инте вичнай ехем Овых, инте фантабах, инте воргах, и дел εναι νομίζειν χαιρουτας αυθρωπων σραστομένων αίμασι, ή τε ACCTATHY JUGIAN B ISPSEZIAN TAUTHY VOLIS OVTAS. Ibid.

<sup>(</sup>A) From av edenotus manhor tes andpartes heren tell ELLS, LINTE DEDOISURE TO TOOPORTION, LING'S GIVA: TINSTAPYOF I λεγεν στι Πλεταρχος ες το ανθρωσος αβεβαιος, ευμεταβολος, Reons Thos oppin, exi tois tuxedi timophticos, mirpolutos. Plutarch. de Superstit.

COR. II. the great end of true theology. 281 ness of his creatures, or rather studying their mifery; must be more terrible infinitely than any earthly tyrant, because the greater the power of any one is, the more there is to be feared, if it be not attended with wisdom and goodness. And shocking have the thoughts of such a Deity been, and so they must neceffarily be, wherever they are entertain'd; more fo than even the uneasy suspicions and misgivings of the Atheist. And then as to futurity; wretched must the condition of those be, who have affronted God a whole life here, under a pretence of believing in him; and cannot be much more tolerable than his. who denied the existence of God: he denies it in words, and they in their lives; and therefore as the difference in guilt is not great, so neither can it be great, as to punishment. A mere pretended belief is in reality none; and a mere speculative belief is little better then infidelity, and will accordingly be treated at last: this is the belief of a devil, and can be no better accepted and rewarded in us than in a devil, notwithstanding the extravagant value put upon it by folifidians and bigots. But when right apprehensions of God, and right behaviour towards him go together, then, and only then, is Theism truly confolatory. The man who both thinks and acts rightly, has not the fame melancholy view of human life and nature, as he who doth neither: the virtuous believer, when he reflects upon his own great imperfection, folaces himself in the contemplation of those divine perfections which are employ'd for his good; finding his want of forefight supplied by divine omniscience, his want of power by the divine omnipotence, and every want whatever by infinite perfection. Trust in this being naturally produces hope, chearfulness, and every other disposition of mind, which encourages, animates, and refreshes the heart. But without a Deity, how gloomy do all scenes of life appear, more so than a family bereaved of it's kind guardian and head, or a ship's crew of their pilot (1), in a tempestuous ocean, without ballast and rudder, or our mundane system without the fun! All images are too faint refemblances of a world without a God, a being who loves us better than we do ourselves, and who neglects nothing necessary to our happiness. To endeavour therefore to banish the belief of his existence and providence out of the world, is an attempt as strange and unaccountable in the Atheist, as if he hould wish himself, and endeavour to persuade also to join him, in desiring, that the

Videas etiam, quæso, lector curiose, illud caput per totum

<sup>(1)</sup> Kadodov de, ower ev uni zußepuntus, ev apuati de moχος, εν χορω δε κορυφαιος, εν πολει δε νομος, εν στρατοπεδω SE nyemon Touto Seos en Koome. Arittot. lib. de mund.

the fun (m) might be extinguish'd, and we involv'd in wretched darkness: it is not only offering an insolent affront to God, but doing the greatest injury to us, as it is destroying all hope, and introducing every tormenting passion amongst mankind; for chance, fate, and all such imaginary causes, are nothing, and therefore can afford us no relief; and to set them up in God's stead, is to do nothing for us.

(n) Of all the antient or modern idolaters, the worshippers of the sun seem to be the most excusable, that luminary being both exceeding glorious and useful. It is the very life both of the vegetable and animal world: of the vegetable world, as it's genial heat rarises the sizy vegetable juices about the tender roots of vegetables, and makes them prolific: and of the animal world; we seel a sensible chearfulness from his approach towards us, disusing his light and heat all around, and a sensible heaviness upon his departure, and leaving us to the darkness and noxious dews and vapours of the night; nay, foul weather and a cloudy day, are more uncomfortable in their effects to many tender constitutions than are generally imagin'd. Do not the animal spirits in several animal machines sink and rise just as the mercury in the barometer?



### COROLLARY III.

Right apprehensions, and a firm belief of the divine perfections are of the utmost importance (n).

By one means and another there are very different and wrong apprehensions of God, which have a very bad influence. With the Epicureans, that effeminate sect of pretended philosophers, he is inadvertent and indolent: with the stoics, a sour philosophic tribe, he is morose and stern: with the inhuman Scythians, he was blood-thirsty and cruel:

<sup>(</sup>n) "Having, from what we experiment in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration, of knowledge and power, of pleasure and happiness, and of several other qualities and powers, which it is better to have than to be without; when we would frame an idea the most suitable we can to the supreme being, we enlarge every one of these with our idea of infinity, and so putting them together, make our complex idea of God." Mr. Locke's Essay.

COR. III. the great end of true theology. 285 cruel: with the Æthiopians, he was wont to be painted black like themselves. As Aretius a painter, recorded with infamy, being often employed to paint the goddeffes to be set in the heathen temples, always drew their pictures by the features and beauties of his harlots, that these objects of his impure love might have veneration and divinity attributed to them, under the titles of Minerva, Juno, (1) Diana, &c. So with the different parties amongst us, we find very different descriptions given of him, in their respective systems, conformably to their different tempers, or which is worse very probably, to their respective creeds. And very evident it is, that these different opinions concerning the Deity have a different influence upon men's tempers, both towards him and one another (p). Let us examine, and we shall find as our apprehenfions

(a) Flagitio infigni semper alicujus seminæ amore slagrans, etobid Deas pingens sub delectarum imagine. Itaque scorta ejus venerabantur. Plin.

So the pantomime in Seneca, who observing the populace well pleas'd with his dancing, went every day into the capitol, and danced before Jupiter, persuaded it would please him

<sup>(</sup>f) According as men's notions are of God, such will their religion be; if those be gross and false, their religion will be absurd and superstitious; if men fancy God to be an ill-natur'd being,—they may fear him, but they will hate him; and they will be apt to be such towards one another, as they fancy God to be towards them; for all religion doth naturally incline men to imitate him whom they worship. Archbishop Tillot. Serm. V. a. p. 161. 60, Vol. I...

prehensions of any one are, so are our dispofitions towards him: if we judge him to be a weak worthless man, we can have no value for him; if a man of good parts, but bad principles, he cannot be an object of our love; but if we take him to be valuable, both in his moral and natural capacity, we both think highly of him, and reverence him. Thus, as our apprehensions of God are, such must our tempers towards him and man too be, right or wrong. Right apprehensions therefore of him are even the main foundation of piety (q).

Now the method of laying this foundation well is as follows. We must, first, extirpate the love of vice, otherwise it will be twining about our judgment as ivy about the oak, till it render our speculations jejune and saples. The Platonists were fo solicitous to have right fentiments of the Deity, that they thought their minds could scarce be purg'd enough from sense and passion, in order to be capable of divine metaphylicks: to which purpole, besides the cathartic virtues which purify the foul, they recommended meditation upon death,

<sup>(9)</sup> The कहा गाड किंड इपान मिलक, खी का प्रश्नियान हमसी פרים ספשמה עדים או בים מעדמי בצמי, שה סידמים, אי לו ואצי των τα ολα καλως κή δικαιως. Epiet. Enchir. cap. 38.

Heu primæ scelerum causæ mortalibus ægris Naturam nescire Dei. Sil. Italicus.

Тити, і.е. Ови учити ворія и прети алидни и ва су voia, auadia z nania avapyns. Plato Theatet.

COR. III. the great end of true theology. 287 death, and fludying mathematicks, that they might be the fitter for converfing in the immaterial and intellectual world.y A moral and divine temper (r) is absolute o requisite for the study of ethicks and theo gy, as the eye must be beloieides, that it may behold the fun: if it be weak and distemper'd, it neither can nor would behold it; fo if the eye of the mind be indispos'd thro' bad dispositions, and a depraved judgment, it neither can nor would contemplate the father of lights. Therefore, as it is the interest of the vicious, either that God should not be at all, or be what he is not; some strive to believe he is not, and in time begin to have some little inspicion of his non-existence, and others strange to have imaginations about him. Let us then put off every vicious temper (s), which would

(r) He that refembles God the most, is like to understand him best, because he finds those persections in some measure in himself, which he contemplates in the divine nature; and nothing gives a man so sure a notion of things as practice and experience; every good man is in some degree a partaker of the divine nature, and seels that in himself which he conceives to be in God; so that this man does experience what others do but talk of; he sees the image of God in himself, and is able to discourse of him from an inward sense and seeling of his excellency. Archbishop Tillot. Serm. vol. 3. p. 42.

(1) Καθαπερ γαρ οι βαφεις προεκκαθαραυτες εςυξαν τα βαξιμα των ιματιών, οπως ανεκιπλύτον των βαφαν αναπιωτι, κ) μηθεποκα γενησομεναν εξιταλον τον αυτον ο δαιμονος τροπον (i. e. Πυθαγορας) ανηρ παρασκευασε τες φιλοσοφας εραθεντας, οπως μη διαξευθη περι τινα των ελπιζομενενεσε θαι καλών κα γαθων.

Lysidis Pythag. Epist. inter fragm. Pythagor. p. 82. Videas etiam quæ ibidem sequentur.

lead us into Atheism, or some scheme not much better.

Again; all shocking apprehensions of him must be avoided, because we shun a terrifying object. Represent him to yourselves as a most amiable and perfect being, the most excellent of all excellent beings, the wifest of all intelligent nature; the father of equity, the author of all good; whose glory no eye can behold, whose greatness no mind can comprehend, whose power no strength can resist, whose presence no swiftness can shun, whose knowledge no fecret can be concealed from, whose justice no art can evade, and whose goodness every creature partakes of: beholding, directing or permitting all things for the best ends; most perfect, most happy, and, in fhort, the greatest and best being. Particularly guard against the Epicurean notion of him; for if you imagine he is unconcern'd about you, you will be thoughtless of him, notwithstanding his majesty and happiness are both infinite.

Also; cultivate esteem and affection for him. A being that has not much poffession of our hearts, cannot be the object of our fre-

quent meditation.

Once more; let us use our reason, in a frequent contemplation of him; call in wandering thoughts, curb animal appetites, and shun all hurry, diversion, and gratifications, inconfistent consistent with the acquest of this divine science; otherwise we cannot to any purpose know him who is infinitely remote from the reach of every corporeal organ, any more than the astronomer can view the celestial bodies and their motions, if he grovel in the dust, or turn his glasses towards some craggy rock or dark cavern. Let us implore his assistance (t), in our pursuit of the knowledge of himself; and make use of all helps, whether from men or books: but above all, let us live a divine life.

Perhaps you may find all this a little difficult, and not very successful at first; but difficulty must not be urg'd, when there is necessity in the case; besides, you will find dissiculties to give way, reluctance wear off, and every progressive step to yield new satisfaction, such as will abundantly repay all possible self-denial; you will converse with the U Deity.

(t) The following excellent piece of devotion cannot fail of being very acceptable to the learned, both for the divine frain there is in it, and the loftiness of thought in every line.

O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas,
Terrarum cœlique fator! Qui tempus ab ævo
Ire jubes: stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri,
Da, pater, augustam menti conscendere sedem,
Da fontem lustrare boni, da luce reperta
In te conspicuos animæ desigere visus.
Disjice terrenæ nebulas et pondera molis,
Atque tuo splendore mica. Tu namque serenum,
Tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere, sinis
Principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus, idem.

Rosth, lib. 2

Boeth, lib. 3. met. 4.

Deity, and derive repeated communications of light from him. Doubtless, an earnest pursuit after this knowledge must be pleaf n'. Does looking into the fprings and causes of things, in the natural world (n): does contemplating lines and angles, circles and other figures, and demonstrating their proportions and properties; nay, does viewing even an old rufty piece of brazen coin, or mutilated statue, tho' many hundred years old, or the Thape of some old mean utenfil or vestment, whether Egyptian, Greek, or Roman, or of any other country: do these studies afford their respective admirers, the philosopher, the mathematician, and antiquary, exquisite delight; and must not this noblest, and most necessary study, also be as delightful to the divine student? His object has nothing but the agreeable, the great, and beautiful: true, it is infinite, and our capacities are narrow; but it's infinite excellency is it's great recommendation, as the endleffness of a prospect contributes to the agreeableness of it (x).

<sup>(</sup>u) Archimedes having found out a method of folving the problem concerning the king of Syracuse's crown, whether it was good gold or no, ran in an ecftacy naked out of the bath, crying out euphxa, euphxa; and T. Aquinas was fo transported with an argument which occurr'd to him against the Manicheans, as he was fitting at a royal table, that he broke out too into this exclamation, jam conclusum eft contra Manichæos.

<sup>(</sup>x) Loquitur egregie Aristoteles: Oti 8 8x 04000 and Seats audities if the vontine cavepor sai auditinpier if the auditosais

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All other knowledge therefore, in comparison with this, is only glittering vanity and vexation, the many reject it as the Lucifugæ do light, which is no objection against it, but an

argument of imperfection in them. I'm agoal

If we take the methods which have been recommended, we shall be out of danger of misconstruing figurative expressions concerning God, very common thro' defect of language, or adapted to the ignorant; as his being in heaven, having hands, eyes, &c. we shall not be apt to conceive of him as existing in any shape or sensible form, or included and excluded any where; but shall interpret all such expressions aright, in the most sublime and spiritual sense, and form no gross images of him in our minds, much less with We shall also understand aright our hands. many common terms and phrases, taken from things we value, and incorporated into the language of almost all who write concerning God.

η μεν γαρ αιδησις ε δυναται αιδανεδαι εκ το σφοδρα αιδητε οιται φορε εκ των μεγαλων φορων, εδ' εκ των ιχυρων οσμων κή κρωματων, ετε οσφραδαι' αλλ ό νες οταν τι νοηση σφοδρα νοπον, εχ ηττου νοει η τα υποδες ερα, αλλα κή μαλλον. το μεν γαρ αιδητικον εκ ανευ σωματώ, όδε νες χωριςώ. Non esse similem impatibilitatem partis sentientis et intelligentis, conflat ex sentiendi instrumentis ipsaque sensione. Sensus enim, ubi nimia est res sensibilis, sentire nequit, id est, nec audire sonos vehementes, nec odores tales olfacere, nec conspicere colores: At mens ubi aliquid concepit quod egregium sit intellectu, non minus id intelligit quam minora, imo et magis: id venit quod sentiens pars non sit sine corpore, mens autem aliquid a corpore separabile. Aristot. 1.3. c.4. de anima.

God, interpreting them in the most exalted meaning. Divine mercy will appear to us what it is in itself, free from uneafiness, and a most placid and rational disposition: divine knowledge will feem to be what it is, intuitive and without toil: ferving God will pass with us only for obeying his laws; thus we shall truly understand all other terms or phrases applied to God (y).

(y) Jamblichus Deurs nosse ita homini ait proprium, ut hinnitum equo. Jambl. de Myst. Ægypt.

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### COROLLARY. IV.

All proper tempers towards God should be cultivated in our hearts.

HIS is to be our next care, after just apprehenfions of him are form'd in the mind, fince these are in order to those, and fland for nothing without them. Had God no care and concern for us (z), we should not, we could not have any concern to obtain his favour: but he is at once the most ex-

<sup>(</sup>z) The greatness and excellency of the Deity in itself, abfracted from any concern of our own, will have a flat and jejune operation upon our hearts. Do we not find by experience, that men have but little regard to the great Mogul, the Cham of Tartary, the emperors of China and Persia! -Who, tho' princes of great power, --- yet they having nothing to do with us, nor we with them, we have therefore but a small regard for them. Whereas, the most ordinary gentleman, who is but lord of a manor, or a justice of peace. with whom we are concern'd to deal, is far more regarded. And thus likewife it must be for our adoration of the divine nature, which will be more or less according as we conceive ourselves more or less concern'd in his providence towards us. Bishop Wilkins's Princip. of Nat. Relig. p. 117, 118.

cellent being in himself, and the kindest to us. And fince there are certain relations between him and us, they ought to be attended to, and all tempers and behaviour on our part agreeable to those relations ought to be preserved. These are the relations of a parent and an offspring, of a most kind benefactor, and highly obliged beneficiaries, a most righteous sovereign, and bounden subjects; in a word, of a God and his creatures. Therefore there must be certain tempers and behaviour agreeable to these relations, which claim our attentive regard. Thus there are certain relations betwixt parents and children, a benefactor and beneficiary, and other correlates, which demand a mutual regard from both parties, and from which there refult mutual obligations to certain tempers and conduct. Thus stands the case between the Deity and us; and our part is to observe the relations we fustain towards him, in particular, and to act conformably to them. Now the tempers and manners correspondent to the foremention'd relations between God and us, are as follow.

The first temper is a profound reverence (a) for him. On his part are boundless perfections.

delineed from ma at depute (a) Reverence is the veneration which arises in the mind, from the persuasion we have concerning a superior, that he has indeed power to do us good or hurt, but not a disposition for the latter. Hobbs.

<sup>(</sup>b) Ocurvæ in terras animæ, et cælestium inanes!
Quid juvat hoc, templis nostros immittere mores,
Et bona Diis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpa?

Compositum

endeavour to make up as well as we can all our defects of knowledge of him, and in all other respects, by a profound reverence of him, fince he knows and honours God best, who reveres him the most.

Nearly allied to this first and fundamental temper towards God is a virtuous filial fear of him. refulting from attention and confideration, and not from imagination and vain apprehensions; and very different from a superstitious dread owing either to gloomy delufion, or accumulated guilt; fince it is that fear which arises in his mind, who confiders himfelf as under the inspection of the supreme governor and judge of the universe, who approves or disapproves him, and will finally reward or punish him, according as he behaves before This is not an effeminate timorousnels, or a puerile panic on one hand, nor superstitious gloom and horror on the other: here is no effect of a creative imagination or delufory misapprehension: but there is infinite power and absolute rectitude on one part, and calm confideration and an awful regard on the other: here there is no running into extremes, regarding the Deity too much or too little,

Composeum jus. fasque animi sanctosque recessus Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto: Hoc doce, ut admoveam templis, et farre litabo. Perf. Sat. 2.

# COR. IV. the great end of true theology. 297

but viewing him as he is, with his thunderbolt in one hand, and with the other reaching out his scepter to us. He who has this divine fear before his eyes, dreads the divine displeasure above all sublunary evils, and dares not knowingly provoke it, by fraud, voluptuousness, ambition, or any other way. Let not then the impious offender pretend to fear God, for he does not: neither let the Atheist call true divine sear a childish or effeminate paffion, fince it is most masculine and rational: nor let him fay it is a torment, fince it effectually frees from misgiving thoughts, which create a thousand troubles, and banishes chimerical, but tormenting fears. this which represents to the man of integrity the most terrifying objects here, in a diminutive light (c), in comparison with the divine displeasure, which is always rational, and back'd

(c) Justum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit folida; neque auster,
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ:
Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus.
Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

Horat. Carm. L. 3. O. 3. Deos nemo fanus timet, furor enim est metuere falutaria, nec quisquam amat quos timet.

Senec. de Benefic. Lib. 4. c. 19. et Epist. 125. To do well, and hope well, are the two most comfortable things in the world.

back'd with all the power and wisdom in the universe. It is an old and just observation, that none are fo pusillanimous, as they who pretend to fear God the least (d): and the reason is plain, because they have no prop for their hope; and besides, it is very fit that they who will not reverence him should dread thunder and lightning, nay, mormo's of their own imagination. Neither let the Theift, feeing the fool hardy Atheist sneering at this divine temper as needless and unmanly trouble, run into the opposite extreme of shivering at the very thoughts and mention of God; for this would be dishonourable, and displeafing to him; it is without any foundadation to the virtuous; it has an ill influence upon virtue, both his own and others; it is fo far from being a branch of religion, that it is destructive of it, and as different from the divine temper just now explain'd, as filial affection is from fervile dread or a flavish panic, or a real parental concern from the bowels of an unkind step-parent; and once more, it can be owing to nothing but superstitious

<sup>(</sup>d) Tully observes of Epicurus, tho' none ever pretended to fear God and death less than he; yet none ever fear'd both more than he. De Nat. Deor. L. 1.

Hi sunt qui trepidant, et ad omnia sulgura pallent, Cum tonat, exanimes primo quoque murmure cœii.

Javen. Satyr. So that their fears were too hard a match for their Atheifin, and effectually prov'd their impious pretences to be falle, and themselves liars.

conceits, or aggravated guilt, and the remedy must be either better information, or a reformation. But, alas, such is the stupidity of many, that rather than be at the trouble of a reformation especially, they will chuse to endure almost the perpetual torment of their guilty sears (e). But let us be wiser, preferring a calm serene fear of God to all vicious gain or pleasure, attended with a guilty conscious dread; thus we shall guard against the madness of atheism, and the follies of superstition.

#### Another

(e) As Tiberius, whose guilty sears imbitter'd life to him exceedingly, as he confesses in his letter to the senate. Quid scribam vobis, patres conscripti, aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore? Dii me Deæque pejus perdant quam perire quotidie sentio, si scio.

Sueton. Tiber. cap. 61.

Neque frustra præstantissimus sapientia assirmare solitus est, si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse aspici laniatus et ictus; quando ut corpora verberibus, ita sævitia, libidine, malis assessimus dilaceretur; quippe Tiberium non sortuna, non solitudines protegebant, quin tormenta pectoris, suasque ipse poenas sateretur. Cornel. Tacit. Annal. lib. 6.

Cui frigida mens est—— Criminibus, tacita sudant præcordia culpa.

Juven. Sat. 11.

Evafisse putes, quos diri conscia facti
Mens habet attonitos? Et surdo verbere cædit
Occultum quatiente animo tortore slagellum?
Pæna autem vehemens, ac multo sævior illis,
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit, aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte, dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.

Juven. Sat. 13.

Another most reasonable temper towards the Deity is love, feated not in fancy, but in the understanding and will, and not the pasfion, but the virtue of love, a defire of pleafing him, and being happy in him, together with a delightful complacency in him; or the love of virtue and righteousness, for there can be no pleasing him but by right tempers and practice, and no delight in him but from a conscious sense of both. Consequently, no vicious creature is a true lover of the Deity, whatever his professions may be; such an one loves not to contemplate him, nor meditate upon his laws; he has no defign of pleafing him, nor true defire of enjoying happiness in him, and neither chuses him for his supreme good, nor his fovereign lord. Whereas the divine lover loves meditation upon the fupreme object of his affection, dreads his difpleasure fincerely, shuns studiously every thing displeasing, values infinitely his favour, and pants after the full and beatific enjoyment of it, as the chased hart after the cooling streams: and in the mean time, because he cannot promote either the perfection or happiness of the Deity, he advances as far as he can his moral kingdom here, by his wife, active, and virtuous conduct. Such is divine love, and such are it's effects: by attending whereto the deluded enthusiast may see that no warmth of zeal or affection is alone this divine COR divit God by le ebbs flatn imp tion obje fine owi upo 2 CO love deg divi

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tion good and COR. IV. the great end of true theology. 301 livine temper: and thus the mistaken lover of God may undeceive himself to his comfort, by learning that it has nothing to do with the bbs and flows of passion, or the fervour and latness of the animal spirits, with mechanical mpressions and ecstasies; but is a most raional temper, all calm and tranquil, like it's bject, which is perfect reason and virtue. In fine, it is not as many strong passions in men, owing to a firong imagination, and plac'd upon visionary objects; but it's object is real, collection of all perfections, without number and bounds (f). Therefore may our love of it be agreeable, both in nature and degree.

Again; all moral tempers, similar to the divine moral perfections, should be cultivated and display'd. As God invariably observes the eternal and unalterable rule of perfect wisdom and righteousness, so should we: as moral perfections are the glory of the divine nature, so they are of our's: as they are the source of the divine happiness, so they are of our's. Therefore it must be the will of God, that we endeavour after a moral resemblance of

him.

<sup>(</sup>f) A collection of all perfections, natural and moral, alone conflictutes the object of our supreme affection; but power, knowledge, and wisdom, tho' infinite, cannot possibly engage our love; if they could, we should love the devil in proportion to his power and knowledge: it is moral excellency, and goodness in particular, which creates considence, trust, love and veneration.

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him. Thus the grounds, the nature and neceffity of an imitation of God appear plain, fo plain, that we find the heathen moralists expressing themselves upon it in very emphatical terms (g); stiling it the end of religion, the most acceptable worship, the greatest honour done to God, and the perfection of goodness; calling also the virtuous man a disciple, an imitator, and the genuine offspring of God. Yet, how little is this most important part of religion understood, and less practis'd even amongst us! who are too apt to consider it only as very defirable and excellent, but not as absolutely necessary; or else as a matter mysterious, and suitable only for the contemplative and recluse. No, it is neither of dubious and uncertain obligation, nor of an abstruse nature. Indeed the nature of it has been darken'd and misrepresented by some mystic writers (b), who have express'd themselves upon it, in language either unintelligible, or almost blasphemous: but this is no proof, that the nature of the thing is dark and unintelligible; far from it, it is only an imitation of God, which any common understanding

(g) Sapientem, pedisequum & imitatorem Dei dicimus, &

fequi arbitramur Deum, id est, 2000 Apul.

(b) Besides these writers, the Anthropomorphites of old, and the Muggletonians of late, have most grossly misreprefented this most important branch of divine virtue.

COR. IV. the great end of true theology. 303 derstanding may easily apprehend, especially if people will only observe, that there are some virtues in us, which have nothing similar to them in God, viz. fuch as imply that we are his creatures, and are become unrighteous in some degree: of the former fort are divine fear, humility, meekness, trust, subjection, obedience, and some other such virtues, which are necessary in us, as the creatures of God: of the latter fort are all the virtues included in repentance and Christian Faith, which speak us to be unrighteous beings. Observing this restriction, let us endeavour to understand clearly the divine moral tempers of justice, veracity, goodness, and such like, set the perfect pattern before our thoughts, and form our moral tempers by it: and let us, after all, be fenfible how imperfect our best moral resemblance of God is, in degree, and be constantly aspiring after a more perfect similitude. The infinitely glorious excellency of the exemplar should not discourage our refolutions and endeavours of this nature, fince the more perfect any pattern is the better, as it excites the imitator to exert himself, that he may come up as near to it as possible. Come then, let us carefully obferve our pattern, us who are the offspring of God, whose happiness therefore, as his, must arise out of a good moral character: let us put off all diabolical and wrong tempers, and

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thine in the divine image, which reason,

duty, and interest all invite us to.

Another virtuous temper towards God is a most humble and submissive refignation to his disposal (i), connected with a placid trust in him. This indeed is difficult to fuch as are but of a fhort standing in the school of virtue; but it is highly reasonable and necessary; a subject which has been exceedingly well manag'd by some heathen moralists, who have feem'd to have exceeded both themselves and others upon it. As this is a lesson difficult to be learn'd, so much is to be said for it, confider'd in any possible light, it appears most fit and necessary. He to whom we are to commit ourselves, is infinitely fit to have the absolute disposal of us, as he is all-wife to know and contrive, and all-perfect to do every thing that is for the best. He is our common parent (k), and therefore will not be unconcern'd about us: he is the perfect author of our beings, and therefore will not be careless of his own productions: he is most perfectly virtuous, and if we be so in proprotion to our short abilities, we are dear to him upon

Oude d'unno so en tero de pus.

Theogn. Sent. p. 383.

<sup>(</sup>k) Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris
Nam pro jucundis, aptissima quæque dabunt Dii:
Charior est illis homo quam sibi. Juven. Sat.

COR. IV. the great end of true theology. 305 upon a twofold account, as his children, and as his good and obedient children. It is not possible, that we should be in so happy a situation, as when under his care and disposal; he is just such a being as we should wish might be our guardian and governor, and the disposer of all things. As for ourselves, that we may confider this affair in another light; we all know, if we know any thing of ourfelves, that we are not wife enough for our own direction, nor have power enough for our own support, nor are good enough for own happiness: infinitely more childish in respect to God, than our children are in respect to us. We should therefore be not only content, but highly pleas'd that we are not left as indifereet orphans, without a guardian and director, to our own fond withes and inclinations; because we know by experience, that we should often chuse amis for ourfelves; and it is certain divine infinite wisdom, which cannot err, and infinite goodness, which cannot be unconcern'd about us, much less cruel to us, are much better for us than our own folly, imprudence, and indiscreet self-love. Let us then no more defire to be at our own disposal, nor be in the least uneafy that we are not fo; but most chearfully refer ourselves to the care of the all-perfect ruler of the universe, after we have done our part in any case: let us say, in the language

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of a virtuous heathen, to our common parent; lead; "Lead me, cleath me, lift me " up or cast me down, inrich or impoverish me, banish me or keep me in my own country, do what thou pleafest to me: and I will not only acquiesce, but apologize for thy providence, and defend it a-5 gainst those who may disapprove it, shewing them it is, and must be for the best (1)". Great and generous is such absolute refignation to the divine pleasure and conduct; whereas on the contrary, it is mean and degenerate to be afraid of trufting him abfolutely with the disposal of us and our's, who made all things, and is therefore fittest to difpose and govern all. It is much for the credit of virtue, to pay a most intire submission to the divine will, as this procures the efteem of all attentive observers to the refigned sufferer, and to that which enables him to fuffer, even with the noblest heroism: nay, as fome of the antients observe, there is not a more welcome fight to the Deity himself, than a virtuous man under the heaviest presfures acquiefcing in his hard lot, and justifying providence in it: and this creates and CON-

Epict. lib. 2. c. 16.

<sup>(1)</sup> Τολμησου αναβλείτας πρώ του Θεου ενωευ, οτι χερμοί אנ אסומסט מט שבאאנ, סעסץ ששעוסטש ספו, וס ש אנוו צלצע משףמודצי μαι των σοι δοκευτων, οπε Jeans, αχε. ην θελεις ειθητα πεpides, apxen me dedes, id wreven, meven, osupen, wendan, שתאדפו : ביש ססו ששבף משמעדשע דצדמו הרסה דצה מושףמשלה משסאסטחססוומו, למצט דחי מצאגא פניסוי סומ פניי-

conciliates an uncommon esteem among men. As Maximus Tyrius speaks of Hercules, if we take from him the savage beasts he slew, and the tyrants he suppress'd, we take from him his honour: so if we take from a virtuous man his temptations from one hand and another, we deprive him of his glory.

Once more; consider not only how unkind to ourselves, and affrontive to God; but also how vain, nay, how prejudicial it is to us to cherish an unyielding disposition to the Deity: for all our reluctance and opposition to him can answer no purpose but what is bad: this method, instead of alleviating, aggravates our burthen, and makes it pinch us worse, as struggling with the yoke makes it gall; it sours our temper, diminishes our strength, and every way makes ill worse.

And our absolute submission to the divine disposal should always be connected with a chearful trust in him. Somewhere or other, our reliance will be plac'd, if not upon our heavenly father, yet upon some being or enjoyment unsit to be the prop of our hopes: so the climbing slender plants, the hop, ivy, &c. lean and cling to that which is next them; and frequently, instead of a tree or pole, twine about a thistle or some other wood, that soon choaks, or withers and fails them. Thus we shall lean upon something or other; if not upon the rock of ages, upon some

some deceitful reed that will break under the least preffure, and pierce and hurt the hand which it should have sustain'd; we shall flee, if not to the inexhaustible fountain of living waters, to fome winter-brook, which overflows when there is no need of it, but is quite dried up when a violent drought comes on. But let experience of our broken reeds, and our deceitful brooks, persuade us to transfer our trust, and place it in unfailing perfection, viz. in him who makes diffress an argument for flying to him: he is a friend from whom we may promise ourselves every real bleffing, without the least suspicion of a difappointment; a friend whose favour towards us will not ebb and flow with our changing condition here, like most human friendship, which finks as the mercury in foul weather, or falls as leaves in Autumn. No, he will either prevent what we fear, or will support us under it, and make it turn out in the iffue to our advantage. He may afflict us, but we may be fure it will be for our good, otherwise he would not afflict us at all; fince he never does it willingly, much less wantonly.



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# COROLLARY V.

The best worship which we can perform, is due to God.

By divine worship we do not mean any external devout actions, the ever so grave and ceremonious, separate from the divine tempers already mention'd: without them, all external worship, how pompous sever, down from common parochial up to the highest cathedral service, perform'd with a vast profusion of ecclesiastic expence, is to the infinite spirit no more than the sound of brass, or a mean tinkling cymbal, a rude and troublesome noise. He loves not to be invok'd and prais'd by unhallow'd lips, and to see the hands of the vicious listed up in

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devotion (m). And all external homage paid in any form, without attention of mind, tho' not with any corrupt views, is but empty and vain compliment and formality, the homage at best but of a speaking, not of a thinking being. No, he made us not to chaunt his praises, and celebrate his glories, only in any external manner, being no lover of ceremoneous acknowledgments and devout gestures, or ecclefiastic music, the' compos'd and play'd by the best hands, or sung by the best voices. The worship he regards and accepts, proceeds from an humble heart, a contrite spirit, sensible of it's own wants, weakness, and unworthiness, of his infinite greatress and goodness, panting after him, and fincerely thankful to him (n).

But

(m) Non votis neque suppliciis mulieribus auxilia Deorum parantur: vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo prospere omnia cedunt. Ubi socordia tete atque ignaviæ tradideris, nequicquain Deos implores, irati infestique sunt. Salluit. Bell. Catalin.

KADATNAMIN d' epdew sep' adavatoros s Design Азушь и надарыя, ет в'азнаа ширга насый Annote on owordnas duesars 78 inantedas, Ημεν οτ' ευναζη, κ' σταν φαθ ιερου ελθη. Ως κε τοι ιλαου κραδιην κ' θυμου εχωσιν' Οφρ αλλων ωνη κληρου, μη τον τεου αλλω.

Hesiod. Oper. &c. p. 19. (n) Epittetus is large and instructive upon devotion. Had we any understanding, fays that excellent moralist, what else would we do, than publickly and privately praise God, and return him thanks? Ought not the husbandman almost continually fing such a hymn to God as this; great is God, who

COR. V. the great end of true theology. 311

But some fay, even of such devotion as this, that it is needless; and others, that we cannot prove it to be at all necessary, by the light of nature only. Let us examine and fee, if both are not mistaken. We own most that both object against prayer, viz. that God knows our wants and defires, and can receive no information about them from us; that he is infinitely good, and wants not importunity from us to dispose him to be kind to us; that he is immutable, and cannot be persuaded by our intreaties to do any thing repugnant to his perfections and honour; further, that he has establish'd laws, both in the natural and moral world, according to which he will proceed in an usual way. Notwithstanding, prayer is not vain, like supplicating the winds, or a senseless impotent idol, which can neither hear nor help: and the divine perfections, instead of being an objection against devotion, are in truth so many arguments in it's favour. Every one may eafily see the vanity of it, if offer'd to a being destitute of these perfections of knowledge, X 4 goodness,

gives instruments to cultivate the earth, and health and strength to do it, &c. If many are stout and indevout, should there not be some who should perform this facred office, and sing a hymn to God? Were I a nightingale or a swan, I should act the part of one; and being a reasonable creature, I should act as such; that is, celebrate the glories of the supreme Deity.

Πρειτου μευ ευ ευσεβει τα πρω πες Θεες, μη μουου θυων, αλλα τοις ορχοις εμμενων, εκεινο μευ γαρ της των χεηματων ευποριας σημείου, τετο δε της τροπων καλοκά γοθιας τεκμημεν. Γιμα το δαιμουιου αεί μεν. Hocrat. ad Demonic p. 7.

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goodness, and steadiness; and that a wooden idol, or a bluftering tempest, are ridiculous objects of devotion. God's perfections are the grounds and reasons of prayer, and it would be strange indeed, if they should be both arguments for, and objections against one and the same thing; it is impossible, as much fo, as that both parts of a contradiction should With regard to the object of worship; there is not the least objection offer'd against it by the most obstinate anti-devotionist, whether deistical or others. And as to the defign of it; neither is there any objection against this, because no rational devotionist pretends to inform, or to teaze and tire him, till he grant us what we want: but the defign is to render ourselves proper recipients of divine favours (0), by prayer in all

(b) It is a great condescension and goodness in God, to accept our imperfect praises, and ignorant admiration of him; and were he not as wonderfully good as he is great and glorious, ho would not fuffer us to fully his great and glorious name by taking it in our mouths; and were it not for our advantage and happiness to own and acknowledge his benefits, for any real happiness and glory that comes to him by it, he could well enough be without it, and difpense with us for ever entertaining one thought of him; and were it not for his goodness, might despite the praises of his creatures with infinitely more reason than wise men do the applause of sools. Archbishop Tillot. Vol. 7. p. 28.

Whatever some high flown enthusiasts may pretend, that it is fordid and mercenary to ferve God for our good; I am fure to serve him for his good is prophane and blasphemous.

Scot's Christ. L. Vol. 1. Part z. Ch. 6.

COR. V. the great end of true theology. 313 it's branches, which every one who confiders it, must own is a very apt means for making the best impressions upon the sincere suppliant. Is it not plain, that taking shame to himself in his penetential confessions, must raise in him a virtuous regret and remorfe, and inspire him with wife and good refolutions; that his earnest imploring the divine favour must kindle in him still stronger desires of a religious kind; and returning his heavenly benefactor his most grateful thanks for his manifold rich favours bestow'd, and for hopes of more behind, together with celebrating his praises, must form him to a thankful and adoring temper? All this is undeniable; therefore fince devotion may be confider'd in a twofold view. both as an act and as a means of virtue, it is both necessary on our part, and acceptable to God; for there is no reasonable doubt, but that is our duty, and well-pleafing to the Deity, which promotes virtue and religion in us: but devotion, that which deserves to be so called, does this (p); and therefore is our bounden

Auto her yap to Genov avendees. at de timas the nuttepas existas evena yevortas. To yap av theory yevorto Geoss.

Sallust. Philosoph, de Diss et mundo, p. 27.

(p) The truths of God have a natural power over the minds of men; and while we recount those truths in our celebrations of him, we are excited to a reconciliation to God. by such contemplations of him. By frequent, serious, and wise converse with God we are assimilated to, and harmonize with him. No man who adores and celebrates the moral perfec-

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bounden duty, and our interest (q). Nay, inward devotion is unavoidable, where there are right apprehensions of the Deity, and due consideration; for these will shew us our manifold obligations to him, and produce a grateful temper; they will discover to us our own impersections, and his infinitely glorious attributes, and beget in us pious desires; they will set before us our own unworthiness, and impress upon us a deep sense of it. As inward devotion then is, upon the supposition just now mention'd, unavoidable; upon the same supposition, external devotion will be almost unavoidable too; a creature sull of the inward

tions of God, which are supreme; and his natural attributes, which are subordinate, with attention and consideration; can be without that admiration of the wisdom, and veneration of

the goodness, and submission to the power of God, which is divine. Archdeacon Jessery's Forms, &c. Pref. p. 5, 6, 7. (q) As the vapours, and even the planets, are purified by the fun; and in some sense made fimilar to it, by being rais'd nearer to his glorious body: fo spiritual creatures are yet more refin'd, and made liker the Deity, the nearer they approach to the fountain of purity and perfection, by faithfully following his attractions: which too, like the fun's, are powerful and vigorous; infuse light and strength. In a word, as the attraction of the fun on the planets, makes them first move, and then defcribe their regular orbits; so this divine attraction in spiritual beings, animates the will, actuates the affections, and these do all the rest that is to be done in this prefent state. And as the discordant attraction of some wandering comets would certainly diforder the harmony of the motions and revolutions of the planets, if they approach'd too near them; fo gross affections, sensual attractions admitted too nigh, destroy the progress of spiritual beings towards the center of their beings. Dr. Cheyne's Philosoph. Princip of Relig. p. 50.

COR. V. the great end of true theology. 315 inward, will very probably break out even andefignedly into vocal external devotion, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth foeaks. And fince mental and vocal devotion together, every one knows by experience, is more impressive than mental alone, and therefore is a more effectual means of promoting virtue, therefore it is not only to be allowed, but to be perform'd as a duty certainly necessary. No objection whatever appears against this reasoning: the conclusion then from it against all anti-devotionists is neceffary, that prayer in the comprehensive and true meaning appears to be our duty, even by the light of nature. This shews it is an apt means of producing many excellent effects; therefore to fet it aside, they must either say it is no fuch means, or that a most useful practice should be dropt: the former cannot be afferted truly, without contradicting the experience of the virtuous part of mankind, and the latter cannot be faid for very shame. Therefore reason will teach us, if we neglect this excellent means, that it is an unreasonable neglect; and if we do not, we ought not to omit it.

As then there is no objection against devotion, let us practise it with all proper devout and divine tempers; for even the stated laws of the universe, and the immutability of God, need not be the least discouragement to us.

For

For those laws are his own ordinances, which he sets aside at pleasure; and his immutability is not that of fate or deftiny, but of the all-perfect governor of the universe, constant. ly adapting the methods of his government to the changing state of the moral and rational world. Were he a necessary agent, and man a mere machine; and were he a fickle being and man the sport of his caprice, devotion then would be as unreasonable as if it were offer'd to the flinty rock, or the inconstant wind: but neither is the case with God or man: God is a free agent, and man his moral fubject; and as the subject behaves well or ill, his moral governor adapts the method of his government thereto. And therefore he will either reverse the laws of nature in our favour, if it be necessary, or will do that for us by those settled laws, which will be the best for us; he will either fuspend the fury of the lions, as he did for Daniel; or the raging heat of the furnace, as he did for the three children; or he will let his own fettled laws have their course, and yet do the best for us one way or other. For the creation is not (r),

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<sup>(</sup>r) Horum sane omnium conformatio prima, nulli rei tribui potest, nisi intelligentiæ et sapientiæ entis potentis semperque viventis; quod scilicet sit ubique præsens, possitque voluntate sua corpora omnia in infinito suo sensorio movere, adeoque cunctas mundi universi partes ad arbitrium suum fingere et refingere, multo magis quam anima nostra quæ est in nobis imago Dei, voluntate sua ad corporis nostri membra movenda valet. Illustrif. Newton. Optic. p. 345.

COR. V. the great end of true theology. 317 as some are pleas'd to tell us, like a piece of clock-work, which will go for a while of itfelf, when wound up, as is evident from the Newtonian, or true philosophy. The works of art continue to move for fome time, without their author, because there is something betwixt them and nothing, which is pre-existent matter: whereas between the works of nature, and their original nothing, there is only that creative power which produced them, which would return to their primitive nothing, were their basis withdrawn. In short, either God governs the world, or he does not; if not, all devotion is foolery; if he does, it is our wisdom and interest.

And now, all speculative objections against prayer being remov'd, we may observe the two sollowing devotional composures as models; both are patterns set us by heathen devotionists, Simplicius and Cleanthes, the former precatory, the latter benedictory. The former runs thus. "O, thou great sove-" reign (s), the father and guide of our rea-

<sup>(3)</sup> Ικετευω σε, Δεσωστα, ο πατερ κὶ ηγεμων τε εν ημίν λογε, υπομυνιδηναι μεν ημας της εαυτων ευγενειας ης ηξιωθημεν 
παρασε, συμπραξαι δε ως αυτοκινητοις ημιν πρω τε καθαρσιν 
την απο τε σωματώ κὶ των αλογων παθων, κὶ πρώ το υπερχειν κὶ αρχειν αυτων, κὶ ως οργανοις κεχρηδαι κατα τον προσηκουτα τροστον κὶ πρώ διορθωσιν ακριβυ τε εν ημιν λογε, κὶ 
ενωσιν αυτε πρώ τα οντως άντα, δια τε της αληθειας φωτώ. 
Το τριτον, του σωτηρα ικετευω, αφελειν τελεως την αχλην 
Αυχιχειν ημων ομματων, οφρα γινωσκομεν, κατα τον Ομμενν, η μεν Θεον, ηδε κὶ ανδρα.

Simplic. Comment. in Epicl. p. 297.

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" alities. In the third place; I befeech the best of beings, that he would remove all darkness from our minds, that we may distinguish between Deity and mortality."

Cleanthes's is a facred hymn in honour of God: part of which is as follows. "Thou "(t) most glorious of immortal beings, whole "names

(1) Κυδις αθανατών, πόλυωνυμε, παγκρατές αιεί,
Σευς, φυσεως αρχηγέ, νομε μέτα πάντα γυβεριών,
Χαιςε. Σε γας πασι θεμις θνητοισι περοσαυθαν
Εκ σε γας γενος εσμέν, ηχε μιμημα λαχοντές
Μεγον, οσαζωειτε ή έρπει θνητ επι γαιαν.
Τω σε καθυμυνσω ή σον κρατος αιεν αεισω.
Σοι θε πας οθε κοσμω εκτομένω περι γαιαν
Παιθεται, κκέν αγνις, ή έκων υπο σειο κρατειται.

Αλλα Ζευς πανδωςε, κελαινέφες, αρχικεραυνέ, Ανθρωπιες ρυε απειροσυνής απο λυγρής, Ην συ πατερ σκεδασον ψυχής απο, δος δε κυρήσαε Γνωμής, η πισυνός συ δικής μετα παντα κυβερνας Ορρ αν τιμήθεντες αμειβωμέθα σε τ.μή, Υμπεντές τα σα εργα διηνέκες, ως επεοικέ Θνητον έουτα επει επει βροτοίς γερας αλλοτε μείζου, Ουτε Θεοις, η κοινον αει νομον εν δική υμνείν.

Cleanth. apud Steph. Poef. philof. p. 49-

COR. V. the great end of true theology. 319

" names and titles are many, whose power " alone is omnipotence, the great author and guide of universal nature; hail, Great Fu-" piter; for it is not only lawful, but very " fit for us feeble mortals to praise thee, as " we are thine offspring and image. There-" fore thee I will fing, and thy power cele-" brate for ever, tho here we are all very " imperfect. The universe is subject to thee, " and govern'd by thee, -- O Jove, the " preserver of all things, the donor of all " good, the almighty thunderer on high. " Deliver mankind from wretched folly, that " they may apprehend how well and wifely " thou governest all things. As thou hast " highly honour'd us, in making us reasona-" ble creatures, it is most fit that we should " magnify thee and thy works: and indeed " no favour greater than this are we capable " of, than to hymn in eternal verse the great

"universal law of equity."
You see the notions of some heathen moralists concerning divine worship: it may perhaps be both entertaining and useful to know what was their practice too, with reference to it. We are told of Socrates, that he was a most devout (u), as well as the greatest

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<sup>(</sup>u) Σωτρατης εις Πειραια κατημι πρόδευξομεν ή Θεω. κ) τες αλλες προετρεπετο, κ) ην ο βιώ Σωκρατες μες ώ ευχης.
Μαχ. Τуг. Diff. 30.

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philosopher; and that his devotion was very excellent, attended always with the greatest submission to the divine will; that what he chiefly pray'd for was a virtuous foul, a calm condition, a blameless life, and a chearful death; and not an opulent fortune, a high station, or popularity and pleasures. The fum of his devotions was a short prayer which a Greek poet compos'd for the use of his friends, in these words; " O Jupiter, give " us those things which are good for us, whether we do or do not pray for them; " and remove from us those things which are " hurtful, tho' we should pray for them." He also recommended very much a form of prayer the Lucedemonians made nie of, in which they petition'd the Gods, " to give " them all good things fo long as they were " virtuous." But the devotional part of this great and good philosopher appears most clearly from the following account of him. "Dost thou wonder, that a prophetic spirit " should dwell with Socrates so intimately inited, fo friendly, fo inseparable, that it " feem'd only not to be one with his mind; whose purity, charity, goodness, strictness of conversation, depth of judgment, per-" fualive

Η οια τυτο ευχετο Σωπρατης οπώς αυτω χρηματα γευστο, η οπως αρχη Αθηναιων— αλλ' ευχετο μεν τοις Εεσις αρετην ψυχης κ νουχίαν βικ, κ ζωην αμεμπτον, κ ενελπε θανατον. Idem ibid.

COR. V. the great end of true theology. 321

" fuafive speech, religion towards the Gods, and integrity towards men, were such as

" render'd him worthy of this friend and

" demon." (x)

To add not much more concerning this glorious character; nothing could be more just concerning devotion, it's nature and necessity, than his sentiments of both. He tells us, the Athenians, in a war with the Lacedemonians, having received many defeats both by fea and land, fent a meffage to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, to ask the reason why they, who had erected fo many temples to the Gods, and decorated them in a most costly manner; who had instituted so many festivals with great pomp and ceremonies; who, in short, had flain so many hecatombs at their altars, were not fo fuccessful as the Lacedemonians, who fell much short of them in all these points of religion. To this the oracle replied, " I am better pleas'd with " the prayer of the Lacedemonians, than " with all the costly oblations of the Greeks." (y) Then he proceeds to shew how the most vicious

<sup>(</sup>x) Θαυμαζεις Σωκρατει συνην δαιμούιον φιλου, μαντικου, ακ παρεπομενου, ανδρι καθαρω μεν τε σωμα, αγαθω δε την Ανχην, ακριβει δε την διατην δείνω δε φρονειν, μεσικώ δε επεν εκ δετιλομούνου κατικώ δε την ανθουτική

κ δετο θεου ευσεβει, οσιω δε τα αυθρωπινα.
 Μακ. Tyr. Diff. 26. et Apuleius de Deo Socrat. p. 68.
 (y) Ευρησεις δε κ) σαρ' Ομηρω ετερα—φησι γας πες Τρωας εταυλίν ποιεμενες,

vicious man might be devout, so far as victims could make him so; but his offerings were regarded by the Gods as bribes, and his petitions as blasphemies. He also quotes two verses out of Homer, where the poet says, the scent of the Trojan sacrifices, upon having finish'd a considerable fortress, was carried up to Heaven by the winds, but all in vain, because the Gods were displeas'd at the wor-shippers, old Priam and his people.

Upon the whole, let us form right notions of the object of worship and of worship itself; may just notions of both form us to proper devout tempers, and let us express these in solemn, masculine, rational, and useful devotion, whether by the help of pre-composed forms, or without them; always remembering that devotion that is not pleasant to ourselves, can scarce be imagin'd to be acceptable to God; and that which does ourselves no good, is

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Ερδειν αθανατοισι τελειεσσας Εκατομβας. Την δε κνισσαν εκ τε πεδιε τες Ανεμες φερειν

Εδωαν της δ' ετι Θεες μακαφας δατεεδαι, Ουδ' εδελων. μαλα γαφ σφιν απηχδετο Ιλιος ιζη Και Πριαμώ, κ' λαος ευμμελιω Πριαμοιο.

Ως ε εδευ αυτοις πρεργιε ην, θυων τε η δωςα τελειν ματην, Θεοις απηχθημενες ε γας (οιμαι) τοιετον εςι το των Θεων, ως ε υπο δωρων παραγεδαι, οιου κακου τοκς ην. αλλα η ημως ευνθη λογου λεγομεν αξιεντες Λακεδαιμονιων ταυτή περιθεναι. η γαρ αν θωνου ωη ω προς τα δωρα η ται θυσίας αποβλεπεσίν ημων οι δεοι, αλλα μη προς την ψυχην, αν τις η οσιος η δικαιος ων τυγκανη.

Plato Alcibiad. 2<sup>d</sup>, 254.

labour intirely lost, since it cannot be of advantage to him to whom it is offer'd; and therefore it must be the offspring of both head and heart, but especially of the heart. Such devotion may easily be vindicated against all adversaries, and only such is vindicable, but not mere religious pomp and ceremony, nor any outward forms.



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## COROLLARY VI.

The fincerest Obedience is due to the Divine Law.

HAT there are eternal differences of things, and different relations of some things to others, has been prov'd before, and it is as evident, as it is there is proportion and disproportion, both arithmetic and geometric: and that God himself always acts according to the unchangeable nature and reafons of things, has been shewn: and therefore, that it is our wisdom and interest to conform our conduct to the divine will, must be very certain, because neither ignorantly nor knowingly can God require any thing from us, but what is fit and good. The only difficulty is to know what is the divine will concerning

concerning our conduct, for concerning the reasonableness and goodness of his will and law, there cannot be the least pretence for doubting. His will and law then are to be learnt by attending to the eternal and unchangeable nature of things, and considering what is fit and good for us, in our whole ca-

pacity and duration.

Conformably then to this law; the confideration of the natural attributes of God, his eternity and independence, his omnipotence and omnipresence, his omniscience and immutability, should raise in us the highest admiration, and impress upon us the most awful sense of him: the consideration of his moral perfections in perfect harmony with one another, and in conjunction with his natural attributes, should effectually influence us to pay him all possible honour and veneration, adoration and worship (z); should excite our fear, raife our hopes, and beget in us the most placed trust in him. This thought, that our whole being is from him, shews us it is to be devoted to him: and the fense of our necesfary and continual dependence upon him for

<sup>(</sup>α) Ει γαρ νευ εχομευ, αλλο τι εδει ημας σοιων ή κοινη ή ιδια, η υμνων το Θεών ή ευφημων ή εσεξερχεδαι τας χαριτας; εκ εδει σκαστουτας ή αρευτας ή εδιουτας αδων τὸν υμνου του ως του Θεου Μεγας ο Θεών οτι ημιν παρεχευ Θργασα Ταυτα, δί ων την γην εργασαμεδα; Μεγας ο Θεών, π. τ.λ. Arr. lib. 1. c. 16.

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our present existence, for all the supports and comforts of it, ought to form us to a devout temper towards him the author of them all.

Again; with reference to our own species, this great law of nature and reason shews us, that the duties of justice and equity, truth and goodness, are so evidently incumbent upon us, from the agreeableness of them to the human frame, and from their great importance to every focial interest, that even men of the vilest moral principles and manners own the necessity of these offices, and that the observance of them should be the care of every political fociety, small and great. To deny that they are necessary to the very being of human fociety; would be as if any one should say there is no need of ease, health, strength, and a due performance of the feveral animal functions in the body natural, to it's life and growth. Therefore, as in the body natural, the several parts would not, were they endued with intelligence (a), clash and destroy one another: fo it should be in the body politic; the members thereof have a mutual dependance upon one another, and all should harmoniously

<sup>(</sup>a) Ut si unumquodque membrum sensum suum haberet, ut posse putaret se valere si proximi membri valetudinem ad se traduxisset, debilitari et interire corpus necesse est: sic, si unusquisque nostrum rapiat ad se commoda aliorum, detrahatque quod cuique possit, emolumenti sui gratia, societas hominum et communitas evertatur necesse est, &c. Cic. de Offic. 1.3

moniously conspire to promote their own mutual welfare (b): every one should do to others, as he would have others do to him, and love them as himself: the effect whereof would be peace, friendship, and every social bleffing: whereas of a contrary temper and conduct in social life, the effect would be the reverse, mutual injury, rapine, and the destruction, not only of the weal, but even of the being of fociety, as experience and observation, alas, may teach us: the weal or woe of all focieties, families or neighbours, towns or kingdoms, arises out of their virtues or vices, as the ease or pain of body flows from it's being in or cut of order. Therefore, as God made us social beings, and intended our social frame for our mutual fatisfaction and pleasure; it is his will and law, that we should distinctly know, and fincerely perform, all focial offices mutually towards one another.

Further, with reference to ourselves, all the human virtues and offices of fobriety and temperance; patience and contentment, and every other branch of felf-government, and self-enjoyment, are so necessary to our own particular interest, as well as to that of fociety, that it has been one grand defign of philosophy, to set them off to the best ad-

<sup>(</sup>b) Optime dixit M Antoninus, Modis & waters ws her Αντονίω μοι η Ρωμη, ως δε ανθρωσω ο κοσμώ.

vantage, and it would be waste of time to en-

deavour to prove they are fo.

And now let us observe of all the offices of the three classes already specified; besides the fitness of them, they conduce to our happiness at present. Even in the present state of imperfect virtue, and confequently mixed good and evil, an uniform observance of the rules of religion, righteousness and temperance, tends by natural and direct confequence to our welfare. Religion, in all it's branches, as a frequent contemplation of the divine perfections, and adoration of them, humbly bowing down before the great, the good parent of the universe, recounting his favours, and with cordial gratitude thanking him for them; refignation to his paternal disposal, and a chearful trust in his fatherly wildom, care and affection; a rational love to him, and unfeigned delight in him, together with a vigorous imitation of him, and filial obedience to his will: all this is not only rational and right, but entertaining (c)

<sup>(</sup>c) Cum animus cognitis perceptisque virtutibus a corporis obsequio indu gentiaque discesserit, voluptatemque sicut labem decoris oppresserit, omnemque mortis dolorisque timorem essugerit, societatemque charitatis coierit cum suis, omnesque natura conjunctos suos duxerit, cultumque deorum et puram religionem susceperit, et exacuerit illam, ut oculorum sic ingenii aciem ad bona diligenda & rejicienda contraria: quid co dici aut excogitari poterit beatius! Cic. 1. 2. de Leg. The

COR. VI. the great end of true theology. 329 to a mind truly religious and devout, and moreover a certain and unfailing source of good hope of the divine favour and acceptance at last, such hope as is unquestionably to be preferr'd to all present possessions and gratifications of the animal kind. The social virtues are the ligaments of the body politic, or as the lacteal veffels in the body natural, they diffuse nutriment, strength, growth and ease to all the members: on the contrary, social vices are destructive often not only of the ease and hale constitution, but of the very life and being of human fociety. The virtues of felf-government, employing our powers for the ends of our existence, and wisely subjecting our appetites to the government of reafon, terminate in felf-enjoyment: but abused faculties, unbridled appetites, and ungovern'd passions, cause self-torment; and they oppress even the heart, damp the spirits, and obstruct the animal functions; whereas kind

The following passage from an ingenious lady may serve instead of an English translation of this quotation from Cicero.

I cannot but admire, says she, the sottishness of those dull Epicureans, who make it their business to hunt after pleasures, as vain and unsatisfactory as their admirers are childish, and in the mean time turn their backs upon the love of God, that source of solid joy. Whilst our souls are inebriated with it's pleasures, our bodies partake of it's sweetness: for it excites a most grateful motion in the animal spirits, and causes such an agreeable movement of the passions, as comprehends all that delight, abstracted from the uneasinesses which other objects are apt to occasion.

Mrs. Norris's Letters on the Love of God, p. 85.

and good passions, and regular appetites, together with friendly offices, comfort the heart itself, promote the animal functions (d), and beget good blood and spirits, even in a natural fense. According to the degrees of vice or virtue, proportionably is the peace or discomposure of the mind, it's inward comforts or troubles, the good or bad constitution of the body, and the weal or mifery of fociety. Therefore, as by the divine original constitution of things, a certain proportion of happiness or misery, personal and social, is consequent naturally from certain tempers and behaviour; it follows this law of nature is the law of God, establish'd with all the energy proper to legislation; and speaks out his mind to us as plainly, as an audible or written de-

(d) There is a certain lightfomeness and chearfulness of mind, which is in a manner peculiar to the truly religious foul, which above all things fets off our pleaf ires, and makes all the actions and perceptions of human life fweet and delightful. True piety is the best cure of melancholy in the world, nothing like it for dispelling heaviness, fitting a man for enjoying himself and every thing else.

Those ardent breathings and workings wherewith the pious foul is continually carried out after God and virtue, are to the body like so much fresh air and wholesome exercise, they fan the blood, and keep it from fettling; they clarify the spirits, and purge them from those groffer fæculencies which would otherwise cloud our understandings, and make us dull and listless.—It is certain piety disposeth a man to mirth and lightness of heart above all things in the world: and how admirable a relish this doth give to all our other pleasures and enjoyments, there is none but can eafily discern.

Archbishop Sharp's Serm. on 1 Tim. 4. 8. p. 72.

Cor. VI. the great end of true theology. 331 claration could do. Which confideration should have a commanding influence upon us, as there is in God every motive proper to engage us to comply intirely with his will, infinite excellency to attract our love, infinite goodness to excite desire, impartial justice, arm'd with resistless power, and directed by unerring wisdom to awake fear, and every thing which is sit to influence every good principle of obedience to him.



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#### COROLLARY VII.

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An after-state of righteous recompences should be joyfully expected by the virtuous, and greatly dreaded by the vicious.

THIS is a plain confequence, as was hinted before, from the moral perfections of God, and appears with the same degree of evidence that his moral character does: if therefore this be demonstrable, so is that. If he is perfect in all moral regards, he will certainly appear to all the moral world a friend of the virtuous, and a foe to the vicious: but he does not in feveral instances appear thus, in his administration here; therefore he will no doubt hereafter. It is very true, that mifery as well as vice in this world, COR. VII. the great end of true theology. 333 world, is less than we often imagine in our gloomy hours: we find the lower rank of mankind, who support themselves by their daily labour, passing away time with more contentment of mind, and eafe and health of body, than most in high stations; the former, and even the day-labourer, enjoying their bare necessaries of life with a higher degree of gaiety of temper, than even the opulent and noble, having fewer defires, and more correct imaginations, thro' necessity and experience, than great numbers of the higher rank. In a word, good of every kind is superior to the evil here, as appears from almost an universal aversion to annihilation: pains are short in comparison with ease, health, and pleasure; there are few indeed who want the necessaries of life; and few, the greater part of whofe duration is pass'd away in forrows. As crimes are more rare than innocent actions, and are therefore more minded and talk'd of; fo distempers, fickness, and pains, being not so common as health, ease and strength, engage our attention, and become the subject of more frequent conversation between us and our friends and neighbours.

It is readily granted too, that virtue, by natural consequence, tends to make men's lives happy here, and in ordinary cases produces this effect, being better for the body, the mind, our reputation; better for others dependent

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pendent on us as well as ourselves, better in every regard whatever: but this is only in usual and ordinary cases: besides these, there are several extraordinary ones, wherein the natural good tendency of virtue is obstructed, and almost quite defeated: it does not fecure us from diseases, disasters, and violence: it has expos'd the virtuous to all the mad rage and cruelty of a perfecuting spirit, and brought on fufferings which, without it, had never been experienced. It is productive only of fo much happiness as depends upon ourselves, and cannot screen us from the forrows that others have it in their power to put us to, and from undistinguishing calamities. No, notwithstanding virtue has real charms, is the fource of the greatest and sublimest pleasures, and naturally is productive of the best effects; her charms have been flighted, her pleasures obstructed, her glorious effects prevented, and her reward here often been only disdain, pain, and at last an ignominious and miserable death: tho' all reasonable proofs have been given, both of her reality and uncommon pitch, doubtless, there have been several excellent persons, whose share of misery unavoidably here has been confiderably greater than that of happiness. Think what some have suffer'd from tyranny of both kinds, spiritual and temporal; what burnings, crucifixions, impalings, and many other methods of cruelty, too

COR. VII. the great end of true theology. 335 too many and shocking to be enumerated (e). and what others have endur'd in a long flavery, more terrible by many degrees than a speedy death: confider how some have linger'd away life under a load of painful, hereditary, incurable disorders, and others been tortur'd, day after day, by melancholy, both bodily and religious: once more think what a complication of evils some have had allotted to them all together, being at one and the same time as poor as Job, and as full of fores, as he or any miserable Lazar, loaden with pain, rack'd with gloomy melancholy, impoverish'd, slander'd, tormented by cruel tyrannical men, and in a condition attended with almost all miserable circumstances; and yet at the same time as virtuous as an Epictetus, and as prudent as a Socrates: confider such instances impartially, and then fay if you can, that their griefs have been over-balanc'd by their pleasures. And then attend to the conclusion from these instances of misery, it is, either that there is no God, or he is immoral and a cruel being, or there is a future state that

Domitius wrote feven books, chiefly to teach the heathen perfecuting princes the various punishments to be inflicted upon Christians.

<sup>(</sup>e) Itaque dici non potest, hujusmodi judices quanta et quam gravia tormentorum genera excogitaverint, ut ad effectum propositi sui pervenerint—Domitius de officio proconsulis, libris septem rescripta principum nesaria collegit, ut doceret quibus pænis assici oporteret eos, qui se cultores Dei consiterentur. Lactant. de Just. 1. 5. p. 331.

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that will make sufficient amends for all past forrows and griefs: but the two first conclufions have been demonstrated to be false; therefore the last, that there is an after-state of righteous retribution, is true. It is fup. posed, that none will have so little regard to the truth of history, or even to his own observations, as to deny that there have actually been fuch instances as these just now described. If then there have, we may be as fure of the conclusion, as we can be of any thing whatever of the moral kind: and, alas, that there have been such, looking but a little into history, either civil or ecclesiastical, into the memoirs of civil tyrants, or the martyrologies concerning church-tyrants, of the two more terrible, will foon convince any one, who can be fo civil as to believe any befides himfelf. And no wonder, that virtue, the most eminent virtue, has been distress'd here to the last degree, confidering what folly and vice, what infatiable avarice, boundless ambition, lust of dominion of one kind or other, what bigotry and prejudice; and, in a word, what dire selfishness prevail in this world, all owing to private or public corruption. Such remarkable instances of distress'd innocence and virtue are undeniable; God has permitted them, for this wife and good reason, amongst many others, to teach us that there is, and must be another state, in which every thing shall

COR. VII. the great end of true theology. 337 shall be set right, and virtue only shall be rewarded, and vice alone punish'd. Indeed from this state and course of things here another conclusion very different has been drawn by men of little understanding, and less virtue; viz. that there is no providence and state after this, and the fouls of men are no more immortal than those of gnats and mites: but men may, thro' prejudice, rashness, and ignorance, argue awkardly from any principle or premisses, and deduce strange conclusions; and this is certainly an awkard, and very wrong deduction. Re-confider the premisses; there is a God, he is a being of a perfect moral character; yet virtue here very frequently has been oppress'd; therefore it follows, it will not always be so; i.e. that there is a future state, in which God will make fuch displays of his moral perfections, as were never either feen or necessary in the present state; suitable to him as the supreme rector of the moral creation, to his own glory, to the joy of the virtuous, the terror of the vicious, and removal of all objections against his moral character and government; fuch for their nature and duration, as his own glory, and the kind and wife ends of his government require. In short, if God be a reasonable, righteous, and virtuous being, and if the condition of many in the moral world has been fo wretchedly miserable as has been repre-

represented; a future state there is and must be: but the premisses are certainly true, and fo must the conclusion be. To deny it would be in effect denying the divine moral character; and afferting it is not so good as that of any man of but common fense and goodnature; for none of this character would, were it in his power, put another in an uneafy condition, or fend him upon a tirefome journey for no valuable end, much less only that he might torment one who never did him any harm, but who would do him all the good that lies in his power. But if there be no future state, God has dealt thus by many; he has made them, brought them up, and then fent them upon the journey of life, to take many a weary step, to be often at their wits end, upon meeting with inextricable labyrinths and mazes on the road; exposed to accidents and cruel robbers, as dreadful as the Lybic lion or Hyrcanian tyger, hardly bestead, and miserably accommodated; and all in vain, on no other errand, or for no other end, than that they might at last have their labour for their pains, that they might be sufficiently tired on the way, at the end might expire, and after all their facigues and forrows, might perish. What, can any impute to the bleffed God fuch conduct as no fenfible, and commonly good-temper'd man would be guilty of? No, if man, imperfect man, would not do it, let

us not imagine that God, the wifest and best of beings, can possibly do it. Wherefore, it follows most certainly, that our present flate of existence is not all, the last as well as first, we shall ever be in; but there must another remain, and immediately fucceed this, that justice may be done both to God and man; to God in his moral character, and to man in his also, for the illustration of the former, and for the recompence of the latter. In fine, the present condition of many is altogether unaccountable, if it has no reference to another, if it be not a state of probation, discipline, and preparation for a succeeding one; without this, all the reason and philofophy in the world cannot justify that, or clear divine providence, from most horrid imputation of folly, cruelty, and the blackest injustice.

But let us here observe, that reason proves only in general, that there is a future state; but nothing precisely of the duration of it, neither that it shall be everlasting, nor that it must be for so many ages, and no longer: we have not existed always, nor do we know by reason that we are to exist always; for any thing it teaches us, as we once were not, so some time hereaster we shall not be; and as we were not a while ago, so we may not be, in a little time. Accordingly, we find sew, if any of the heathens, who believed a future

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state, persuaded (f) that it would be eter nal but that in a revolution of some ages, annihilation would be allotted to us. No attribute of God, nor all of his attributes together, shew us that our future state must be eternal, otherwise God cannot be a wise, or a righteous, or a good, or a holy, or a persectly moral governor of the world: from them we cannot, however at present, infer that our suture existence must be everlasting, any morethan that our past existence should have been so.

Neither does the divine moral government prove, that we must exist for ever: but all we can learn by reason, from both the persections and moral government of God, concerning a future state, is, that God will make a difference hereaster between the virtuous and vicious; such in the nature and duration of it as shall be decorous to himself, and shall vindicate the honour of his moral government. Revelation indeed, that inestimable blessing, shews us that our suture existence shall be eternal; but it must be remember'd, that we are now making use of the light of nature alone.

Now a future state in general being demonstrated only from the moral perfections of God, and the present condition of man compar'd together, and other arguments for this

<sup>(</sup>f) Dia mansuros aiunt stoici animos, semper, negant. The stoicks in general said, that the soul would exist hereafter, till the conflagration of the world, and no longer.

Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. 1-

COR. VII. the great end of true theology. this purpose being both unnecessary and foreign to our present subject, we will not insist upon This which we have made use of is certainly the best of all, and so clear and strong, that it has given satisfaction to wife and virtuous men in all ages, as to this point of fo much importance; fo that wherever there was any belief of the being of God and his providence, this also of a future state always attended it. This is accompanied with that degree of evidence, and so irrefistably carries conviction along with it, that no Epicurean could ever advance any tolerable argument against the probability, much less against the possibility of another state. Wherefore in all ages, not only men of reflection, but the unthinking vulgar have been apt to give into this notion (g), without any other arguments than this drawn from the moral perfections of God, and the condition of man here. The reasoning of Cyrus the elder upon this grand point, just before his death, is well known to the learned; and as it is exceeding just,

Πειθεθαι δε ετως αιει χρη τοις παλαιοις τε η ιεροις λογοις οι δε μηνουστιν ημιο αθανατον ψυχην ειναι, δικας ας ιφειν η τινείν τας μεγις ας τιμωριας ωταν τις ωπαλλαχθη τε σωματ ... Plato Epift. 7.

<sup>(</sup>g) This was the belief of the old Greeks and Romans, of the famous schools of Pythagoras and Plato, with all the eminent philosophers of other sects, except the Epicureans and Cyrenians; also of the antient Gauls, Germans, and Britons, under the institution of the Druids; of the Thracians, Egyptians, the Asiatics, the Indians, and Americans.

just, it cannot but be useful and entertaining to the unlearned. Thus he address'd himself to his children, when he was almost at the point of death: " Think not, my dearest children (b), that when I depart from " you, I shall be no more; but remember, " that my foul, while I have been with you, " was invisible to you; yet by my actions " you were fensible it existed in my body. "Believe it therefore existing still, tho' still " unseen .- For my own part, I could " never think that the foul, while in a mor-" tal body, lives; but when it leaves it, "dies; or that it's consciousness is lost, when "discharg'd out of an unconscious habitation. "But when it is freed from all corporeal al-" liance, then it truly exists. Farther, when " the human frame is diffolv'd by death, tell " me what becomes of it's parts? It is vifible whither the materials of all other beings

(δ) Ου γαρ δηπε τετο γε σαρως δοκετε ειδεναι, ως ειδεν εσομαι εγω ετι επειδαν τε ανθρωπινε βιε τελευτησω ειδε γαρ υυν τοι την γ εμην ψυχην εωρατε, αλλ οις διεπραττετο, τετοις αυτην ως εσαν κατεφωρατε. τας δε των αδικα παθοντών ψυχας επω κατενοησατε οιες μεν φοβες τοις μιαιφονοίς εμβαλλεσιν, οιες δε παλαμναίες τοις ανοσιοίς επιπεμπεσί. τοις δε φθιμενοίς τας τιμας διαμένων ετι αν δοκείτε, ει μηδενώ αυτων αι ψυχαι κυριαι ησαν; ετοι εγωγε, ω παιδες, είδε τετο πωποτε επειδην, ως η ψυχη εως μεν αν εν θνητω σωματι ή, ζη οταν δε τετι απαλλαγη, τεθνηκέν ορω γαρ στι κ) τα θνητα σωματα οσον αν εν αυτοίς χρονονή ή ψυχη, ζωντα παρεχεται. είδε γε οπως αρρων ες αι η ψυχη, επείδαν τε αρρονώ σωματώ δικα γενηται, είδε τετο πεπεισμαι. αλλ οταν ακρατώ ή καθαρώ ο νες εκκριδη, τοτε κ) φρονιμωτατώ εκώ αυτον είναι.

Xenophon. Cyr. lib. 8. p. 219. Videas etiam Caton. major.

" are translated; namely, to the source from " whence they had their birth. The foul " alone, whether present or departed, is not " the object of fight." And Cato the elder to Scipio and Lælius: " What (i) but this " is the cause why the wisest men die with " the greatest æquanimity, the ignorant with the greatest concern? Does it not seem, that those minds which have the most extensive views, fore-see they are going to a happier condition, which they of narrower " prospects do not perceive? For my part, " I am transported with the hope of seeing " your ancestors, whom I have honour'd " and lov'd; and am earnestly defirous of " meeting, not only those excellent persons " whom I have known, but those too of " whom I have heard and read, and of whom " I myfelf have written; nor would I be de-" tain'd from so pleasing a journey. O happy " day, when I shall escape from this croud, " this fink of pollution, and be admitted to

<sup>(</sup>i) Ni quidem animi immortales effent, haut optimi cu jusque animus maxime ad immortalem gloriam niteretur. Quid, quod sapientissimus quisque æquissimo animo moritur, stultissimus iniquissimo? Nonne vobis videtur animus is, qui plus cernat, & longius videre, se ad meliora proficisci: ille autem cujus obtussior sit acies, non videre? Equidem efferor studio patres vestros quos colui et dilexi, videndi. Neque eos vero solum convenire aveo, quos ipse cognovi, sed illos etiam de quibus audivi, et legi, et ipse conscripsi. Quo quidem me proficiscentem haut sane quis sacile retraxerit, neve tanquam pilam retorserit. Quod si quis Deus mini largiatur, ut ex hac ætate repuerascam, &c. Cic. Cato major.

none

" that divine affembly of exalted spirits! " When I shall go, not only to those great " perfons I have named, but to my Cato, " my fon, than whom a better man was ne-" ver born, and whose funeral rites I per-" form'd, whereas he ought rather to have " attended mine. Yet has not his foul de-" ferted me, but feeming to cast back a look " on me, is gone before to those inhabitants, " to which it was fenfible I should follow, " And the' I might appear to have born my " loss with courage, I was not unaffected " with it, but was comforted with this affu-" rance, that it would not be long before we " should meet again, and be divore'd no " more." Here is reasoning that is satisfying, and hope that it is entertaining; hope, the most agreeable passion that we are conscious of here, so entertaining, that it is hard to say which is more fo, whether hope or enjoy-Without this, our few and transient ment. enjoyments here, how infipid would they be! It is this that is the spring of all life and action in the moral world, this that creates ferenity, and a vital heat in the breaft, and beguiles our laborious and painful hours. certain, the life fullest of hope is the happiest, and confequently, the firmer and greater hope is, the happier must life be. This holds good of hope in general, and especially of religious and virtuous hope in particular, there being

COR. VII. the great end of true theology. 345 none comparable to it, either in firmness or fublimity. And this hope has this other excellent property, that it is the greatest and the most vigorous, when there is the most urgent need of it, and that is at death, as appears particularly from the reasoning and temper of the elder Cato. It is this which answers all difficulties in theory, removes objections against providence, and alleviates all temporal evils, and even the last and greatest, the agonies of death. Let us then indulge and cherish this most excellent passion, and not with Infidels and Atheifts strangely wish for annihilation; because we may have our hopes gratified, but they must infallibly, but terribly, be disappointed. But then let our hopes of futurity be wife and reasonable. founded on our own virtuous tempers and conduct, and on the virtuous benignity of God: thus they will stand firm, and be most certainly accomplish'd in a little time; but all other hopes, founded on empty speculations, vain professions, unprofitable external performances, either our own, or those of others. tho' spiritual men, and of the highest order too, are no better than a building upon loose fand, or a spider's web.

Then let us, for our own fakes, entertain a hope so great and glorious, as well as very reasonable; for great and vigorous hopes are strong and vigorous joys; and consequently, this

this being the most glorious hope, must yield the highest delight, be the greatest refreshment to the foul, enhance all our prefent enjoyments, and alleviate all present troubles. True, our knowledge of the glorious object of this hope is very scanty; it is no more as yet than seeing darkly, as thro' a glass, and that a very dim one: however, it is evident, the prize is great, as Plato speaks, whether we confider the donor of it, or the gift; the donor is God; a great and good being, who, as he made us without our knowledge, can make us happy too without it; and the gift is the final reward bestow'd by him upon his own obedient offspring, and the living images of his own glorious perfections. Should therefore any impertinently tell us, all this is only fancy and delusion: grant it is but a dream, yet as it makes us happier and better, none should rob us of it. Again, let us embrace this hope, and fecure it for the necessity of it. Without this, what will all the boafted charms of virtue, a principle of honour and conscience, and other such guards of virtue avail? She will prove but as an empty name, and we shall be apt frequently to exclaim against her, as Brutus did a little before his " O virtue, I have worshipp'd thee " as a substantial good, but I find thou art an "empty sound." But this joyous prospect gives life and efficacy to all other motives to virtue, debilitates temptations, and shews them

COR. VII. the great end of true theology. 347 them to be trifles, as the light of the sun causes that of the stars to vanish.

And now, as to our fears of future evil; these must be as reasonable as hope of future good. And tho' we know no more of their shocking object, than of that glorious one of our hopes; yet it is certain, the evil must be great indeed, confidering who will inflict it, the impartial rector of the moral world, and the general nature of it, that it is the final punishment of the vicious. Sad then must it be both as to it's nature and duration, in exact proportion to every one's demerits. As this passion then is rational, and also the strongest belonging to our frame, let us indulge it as far as our case requires; thus it will soon cease to give us uneafiness, and be to us no more than what filial fear is in an obedient child of a wife and good parent.



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## RECAPITULATION

OR

#### SUPPLEMENT:

SHEWING

The importance of the knowledge of God, and the method of attaining it.

S we have in the preceding pages, only given hints concerning the importance of this knowledge, and the Methods of obtaining it, and as these subjects, tho' of great moment, yet are but seldom insisted upon

### 350 The great importance of right

upon by either philosophers or divines, and still more neglected in practice than in speculation; let us consider them distinctly and more largely.

First, the importance of having right ap-

prehensions of God.

Indeed there are many, who have not God in all their thoughts, without any passion for, nay, not free from a wretched aversion to this knowledge; choosing to meditate upon any thing sooner than upon God, and to converse with any Being rather than contemplate the greatest and best of Beings: Yet meditation upon him and a right knowledge of him are absolutely necessary; as appears from the

following confiderations.

1. A right knowledge of him is necessary to acceptable worship of him. Certain it is, nothing we can do, can be pleafing to him but what is agreeable to his nature and perfections; therefore if we be ignorant of them, we must be in the dark about that worship which will be acceptable to him. And wrong apprehensions concerning him will put us upon wrong methods of ferving him, fuitable to our false conceptions. Thus, they who take him to be a testy and arbitrary Being, conducting himself by no principles of justice and goodness, nor acting by any rules of wisdom and right, may crouch and tremble before this idol of their own making, but cannot possibly possibly esteem, honour, and reverence him. Such thoughts of God as these, have been the cause of most shocking ferity and barbarous cruelty in divine worship; and many have imagin'd, they could not please God better than by displeasing themselves the most, or acting the most contrary to the principles of felf-love and felf-preservation. What terrible facrifices and oblations has gloomy superstition been the inventor of! Often has the dismay'd votary cut, flash'd, and tormented himself even to death, in worshipping his God; and at other times he has offer'd up his own offspring or the reeking Bowels of some human facrifice or other to the God he worshipp'd. Thus we read in Revelation, of the priests of Baal cutting themselves, and of children being made to pass thro' the fire to Molock, not only amongst the heathers, but the Yews, and of their offering the fruit of their bodies for the fins of their fouls. The antient Britains (a), our Ancestors, were as guilty as any People of this aftonishing horrid kind of worship.

On

<sup>(</sup>a) Human facrifices have been very common in many sountries, in Virginia, Florida, Peru, Mexico, and many other countries in America, also in Africa, in Afia, and even in Europe, and in Britain itself, where it was a religious custom to facrifice captives, in order to foretel things to come, as Julius Casar and Tacitus both inform us: And of the Isle of Man, Tacitus says it was the seat of the Druids, those men sacrificers, and that they used to offer these facrifices in woods.

On the other hand, if the worshipper of God conceive of him as a Being apt to be pleas'd with little matters, as external rites and forms, outward obeisance and postures, and such trifles; then the worship of God arising from these low thoughts of him will be only outward pomp and solemnity, a multitude of rich presents and oblations, variety of cringes, bowings and odd gestures; and such a worshipper will make it his only concern to sooth the object of his worship with officious addresses and please him with affect-

ed compliments, and pompous forms.

It is very usual for people to conceive of God by themselves, as it is common for one man to judge of another by himself. Therefore the gay and unthinking are apt to imagine that what wou'd please them, will also be acceptable to God: To others of a four and gloomy disposition, God is severe, soon offended, but hard to be reconciled; and as their apprehensions of him are, such will be their addresses to him, and their worship of So the Papist thinks he is pleas'd with bodily aufterities and rigours, and therefore he wears his hair-shirt, or walks bare foot, or whips himfelf, &c. imagining not only that thongs and whip-cords are proper means of grace, but proper instruments to worship with, as fit as any of the facred Jewish utenfils were, their cenfor, altar, and fuch like. amongst

amongst the reform'd, very trifling matters

frequently pass for divine service.

But a right knowledge of God, of his nature and perfections, wou'd put an end to all religious barbarity and foolery; it wou'd wherever it prevails, banish all devout cruelty on one hand, and all devout ludicrousness and folemn farce on the other, and instead of inhuman rites and ridiculous ceremonies, of holy flashing and butchering and religious tricks it wou'd fubstitute a worship consisting of exalted apprehensions of him, profound veneration, ardent pious aspirations, unfeigned penitence, fixed holy resolutions, the fincerest gratitude, and intire devotedness to him: it wou'd not be inventing this or that mode of worship, in such or such a garb or dress, with fuch and fuch postures in preference to all others: nor wou'd there be any imposing upon others any one uniform mode of worship, and persecuting those who cou'd not comply with it.

2. Right apprehensions of God are necesfary to a sincere and vigorous imitation of him. A matter of the greatest importance, tho' it is to be seared many have very wrong thoughts of it; in this consists true and substantial religion; this is the idea of religion, which we find embraced amongst the best moral writers in the heathen world: with them religion is nothing less or more than

A a

this, and a good or religious man is he and he alone who is an imitator of God; it is he who is the offspring of God. The very fame idea of religion and of a religious Man is given us by Revelation itself, and the inspir'd writers often direct and enjoin us to be imitators of God, or aspire after a vital and divine resemblance of him in his moral perfections, his mercy, truth, holiness, and particularly in his goodness. In them therefore who believe the heavenly revelation, there can be no doubt of the necessity of a divine similitude on our part to God; nor can they be in the dark at all concerning the nature of it, if they attend to the directions and commands given them relating to this important matter. And in them who do not believe this revelation, there can be no scruple concerning the necesfity on our part of a vital moral image of God, if they believe these few principles of natural religion, the Being and perfections of God and a future state of retribution.

For the happiness of God is founded in his holiness or virtue, or he is therefore a happy Being because he is holy; therefore, as we are the offspring of God, our happiness must result from our holiness or virtue. And therefore a right knowledge of him must be absolutely necessary, for there can be no imitation of him without it. Absolute ignorance of him must prevent all imitation of him whatever.

whatever, right and wrong; and wrong apprehensions of him can terminate in nothing but a wrong imitation of him and a supposed imaginary fimilitude, but in a real diffimilitude. And therefore they who have very mistaken apprehensions of God, may be growing up in fimilitude only to fome accursed fiend or fury at the same time, that they imagine they are improving in divine moral tempers and habits, as they may imagine, thro' horrid notions of God, that they are doing him good fervice, when they are doing the very contrary. Befides, we should by all means confider, that a divine refemblance of God is necessary to our enjoyment of him hereafter. In the animal world, we fee fimilitude is necessary to any degree of focial pleasure and happiness; one species does not affociate with and delight in another species, but like to like: and in the moral world, there is as great and real difference betwixt the vicious and virtuous, as if they were of different Species: and in the after unembodied state, the world of spirits, the great bond of union must be similitude of moral tempers and dispositions; it is this that will operate there somewhat like the great principle of Gravitation or attraction in the material creation here; it is this which will affemble and separate; assemble them of the same Aa2 temper

Further; it shou'd be considered, that the happiness of every Being is suitable to it's nature, the pleasures of a brute are brutal and distinctly agreeable to it's particular nature, whether it be of the creeping, the slying, or swimming tribe; and the happiness of a rational Being must be rational; consequently the supreme felicity of man must be rational, as the superior part of his compound nature is rational, and therefore it must consist in knowledge and goodness, in intellectual light and

and in virtuous habits and virtuous enjoyments, the first suitable to his understanding, the two latter to his will and other powers. A sensual felicity is brutal, and is only suitable to his brutal or animal part, and therefore is too scanty, too mean to be his supreme felicity, unless he were a brute and no more.

3. Right apprehensions of God are necesfary to a rational worthy love of him and delight in him. For it is undeniable, there can be no love of nor delight in an unknown Good, or in perfection that is not apprehended; as the blind man cannot take pleasure in the most beautiful scenes of nature, or in the most finish'd pieces of art; nor a deaf man be pleas'd with the most ravishing harmony of musick. And it is the very same with them who have the organs of fight and hearing, but yet close their eyes or stop their ears, and will not enjoy the pleasures of either sense. Thus it is with one who will not know God, and contemplate his infinite amiableness; it is all no more to him than the melody and fongs of the Syrens were to Ulysses and his companions, when they stopp'd their ears and wou'd not hear. It is all but darkness or nothing to a mind averse to God, and which chooses to have him in none of his thoughts: or it is deformity itself and imperfection to a mind full of misapprehensions concerning him, as the fun was but a very diminutive globe Aa3

globe of light to Epicurus (b), according to his puerile and most unphilosophical ideas of it. If we wou'd fee light, we must open our eyes and behold it, and if we wou'd hear harmonious notes, we must listen and attend to them; and if we wou'd love God and delight in him, we must open the eyes of our intellect and contemplate his perfections, particularly his goodness; for of all his perfections it is goodness that is the most apt to beget love. His power, because it is omnipotence, may excite terror; his knowledge, because it is omniscience, may raise our wonder and aftonishment; his duration and presence, because they are eternity and omnipresence, may draw forth our admiration and furprize; but it is goodness, moral goodness alone, and especially his benignity, that kindles love and is the fovereign attractive of the heart. Without this, his power would have nothing amiable in it, no more than there is in a tempest or in the strength of the Leviathan; his wisdom wou'd be infinite craft, and no more

(b) Nec nimio Solis major rota, nec minor ardor Esse potest, nostris quam sensibus esse videtur.

Lucret.

Thus Homer represents the fall of Vulcan from the Seat of the gods which was above the fixed stars, down to the Isle of Lemnos, as taking up but one day.

May of nuag pegopiny, of nexio naladule

Yet according to modern aftronomical computation, Vulcan wou'd have been more years than he was minutes in falling.

lovely than the knowledge of a fiend or devil; without moral goodness, all his attributes would be not only unamiable, but horrid and terrible. But he is as much superior to other Beings, the most perfect of them, in his moral, as he is in his natural attributes; as much in goodness as in greatness. Thus revelation teaches us, that he is the only boly one, as it does that he is the only potentate, the only wife God, that there is none good but God, as there is none who has immortality in himself but he. This is the glory, this is the beauty of the divine perfections, that which casts glory over all the rest; according to the same revelation, earthly parents are evil, the best of them imperfect in parental affection and tenderness; the tender mother may forget her fucking child, and may not have compassion upon the son of her womb: but our heavenly father cannot possibly prove unkind and cruel. Indeed he afflicts, but it is not willingly, nor out of mere caprice or humour, but because it is necessary in him the great governour of the world, for his own glory and for the good of his moral Subjects; and it is long, frequently, before he does chastize and correct; and, when he does it, it is with a divine Reluctance, and he foon gives over, as foon as it is proper to be let alone. Therefore all the miseries we endure here, or may fuffer in the other world, are Aa4 no

no arguments against the divine benignity, but are only proofs of our disobedience, and of his most perfect wisdom and paternal concern for us.

Thus conceive of God, as one who is as good as great, as a bountiful benefactor to all his creatures and an univerfal lover of the fouls of men, one who wou'd have them all be happy, and contributes every thing in order to this great and good end, that is becoming him, as one rejoicing in the actual felicity of his offspring, and gratifying no revenge nor groundless hatred or pique against any, in either their present or future miseries, but herein acting as a most perfectly good Being. These are amiable thoughts indeed of God, and no more amiable than just; for he is infinite perfection, and therefore can no more deserve hard thoughts from us, than his power can become weakness, or his goodness can turn into hatred and ungovern'd vengeance: man may prove false, the tender sex may prove cruel, the fun may vary and be eclipfed, and become at last no more the fountain of light and heat than a dead cynder; but with him there is no variableness nor shadow of Confider, can the felf-existent turning. and independent being change for the worse, the infinitely happy and good Being? The necessary supreme Being? No, no more than the nature of things can change, than

than the relations between them can alter, and the part of any thing ever become greater or equal to the whole. These relations must continue the same, and so will God, whatever is done in any part of his creation, or in

any part of his duration.

A mind full of these ideas of God finds it pleasant to think of him and contemplate his various infinite excellencies, highly esteems him, reverentially venerates him, longs for his favour, dread his displeasure, complies with his will, fubmits to his pleafure, and fixes on him as the most delightful object of his meditation and affection. This is the divine lover; but with a mind without thought of God or without fuch thoughts as these, it is not thus. Where there is no opinion at all, or no good opinion of any person, there can be no fincere esteem and cordial love; let us but look into our own breasts, and we shall find it fo; fo where there are no thoughts, or only hard, gloomy, superstitious thoughts of God, there cannot be pious adoration, reverence, love and delight in him. matter of fo much importance, that it deferves to be frequently inculcated; but we must now leave it to the reader, to judge of it and practife it as he fees fit.

However, let him consider here, that the knowledge of God is necessary to any part of Religion whatever. The want of it must be

the cause of the want of every divine temper, and mistaken thoughts of him the cause of wrong tempers towards God. As confidering him governing the world, not according to the eternal and invariable rules of wisdom and equity, but according to arbitrary will, wou'd make us afraid of him; and as imagining his holiness is only a fondness for external pomp and splendour, or for bloody and barbarous rites and oblations, will make us only ceremonious or inhuman in our worship of him: so fancying his mercy is fond pity or a weak tenderness of nature will animate us to disobedience against him, and breed in us a contempt of him: and shou'd we consider him, with the Epicurean, as an unconcern'd idle spectator, wrapt up in a state of inactive indolence, regardless of the works of his own hands, we shall be apt to difregard him as much as he does us. The same observation may be made of every wrong thought of God, that it has a pernicious effect one way or other, and cannot be otherwise. On the contrary, just and worthy thoughts of him will have an excellent tendency; contemplating his power as govern'd always by perfect wildom and goodness inspires veneration of him, and confidering his holinefs as a conformity to the unchangeable rules of righteousness excites in us a watchfulness against all unrighteousness, conceiving of his mercy

as regulated by his other moral perfections wou'd deter us from making too free with him, and invite us to a reformation of what is amifs. In short, his infinite goodness clearly apprehended by us, wou'd raise our affections towards him, his ineffable glorious greatness wou'd excite the profoundest awe and reverence, and all true divine knowledge wou'd beget delight, chearful hope, a placid trust, and every divine temper, and produce proper conduct or behaviour. In fine, as our notions of him are, such will our religion be, and such shall we be towards one another, since all religion doth naturally incline men to imitate him whom they were him.

tate him whom they worship.

4. This knowledge of God is as pleafant as it is necessary. It is pleasant to know and contemplate God's creation, because there are displays of his perfections to be met with in every part of it; and for this reason it must be infinitely pleasanter to know and contemplate him, in whom all perfections meet in their highest exaltation, nothing but what is amiable and excellent. True, our finite minds cannot comprehend him, nor can we fully understand the minutest creature he has made; yet this does not hinder but our knowledge of him may be pleafant. It is a pleafant thing for the eye to glance upon the fun, or to have an endless prospect before it: in like manner it must be pleasant for the mind

to have unlimited excellency for its object, and fuch an object is God, and he only, whom none can by fearthing find out to perfection: it is pleasant for a virtuous mind to confider any virtuous character and view it all over, the noble fprings and principles, the kind affections, the worthy ends, the arduous and generous efforts and all other amiable parts that go to make up the beautiful whole: this is delectable, tho' it be the character but of an imperfect man, as of a Boyle or a Newton; but infinite is the difference between the best of moral characters, amongst us and that of the perfect Maker of all things; for there's none of our characters perfect, either in intellectual or moral regards, and none perfect even in their most shining branches; but in God there's all perfection and nothing but perfection, power that is omnipotence, wisdom and knowledge that are omniscience, and virtue without vice. The contemplation of this object, that is all excellency and perfection, unchangeable and everlasting, and the only object of this kind that there is or can be in the universe; how pleasant must it be, nay, rapturous, always fo, as there is invariable and infinite perfection. If perufing the book of nature affords the philosopher still fresh entertainment, as he meets still with more beauties in it; nay, if perusing some books of art, as Homer or Milton. Milton, affords the reader still new pleasure (c); much greater must it be to contemplate the God of nature.

But then you must observe, the pleasures of divine contemplations are just as the mind is prepar'd for them; to a careless, thoughtless mind, there may be no charms even in the works of nature, and to an unpoetic genius no beauties in the finest poems, whether antient or modern; thus light itself, tho' pleasant to almost the whole animal creation, that is endow'd with the organs of vision; yet is disagreeable to owls and batts.

The knowledge of God being so important and pleasant, the most necessary, the most useful, and the most pleasant knowledge, infinitely superior to all other knowledge whatever, whether historical, political (d), or philo-

(c) Arcefilaus was so great an admirer of Homer, that he always read some part of him at night and in the morning.

Απεδεχετο δε παντων μαλλου Ομηρου, έ και εις υπνον ιων παντως τι αιεχινωσκεν, αλλα και ος δρε λεγων επι τον ερωμενον απιεναι, οποτ' αν δουλοιτό αναγνωναι.

Amplectebatur Homerum maxime ex omnibus, cujus adea fludiofus erat, ut semper ante somnum ejus aliquid legeret. Mane quoque quum surgeret, dicens se ad Amasium ire, quum se velle legere innueret.

Diog. Laert. in Vit. Arcesil. Lib. 4.

So great an admirer of Virgil was the famous Dr. Harvey, that fometimes as he was reading his darling author, he cast the book down, faying, he inchanted.

(d) It is the opinion of a great French critick, that politicks are the vainest of all sciences: And whoever will read Mr. Harrington's Oceana, tho' a performance much admir'd in the political world, may perhaps give into this sentiment.

philosophical, whether the knowledge of languages, or of men or of things; it must be very useful to shew how it may be attain'd. And it may be acquir'd in the following me-

thod.

... We must by no means ascribe any imperfection to him. For if we may ascribe one to him, we may ascribe a second, a third, and as many as we pleafe, and thus represent to ourielves the most perfect and excellent Being as the most imperfect and disagreeable. Therefore, in Revelation, which affords us the highest apprehensions of God that can be met with any where; great care is taken to remove every imperfection far from him, both of a natural and moral kind; all natural imperfections, as ignorance, forgetfulness, weakness, corruptibility, mortality, being confin'd te or excluded from any place, and every other of this fort: and all moral imperfections, as countenancing fin and finners, fickleness, tempting to fin, as being tempted to it, and all the various branches of moral evil. True, in Revelation we find, the parts of a human body and the passions of a human foul afcrib'd to him; as hands, eyes, and other corporeal members, and repenting, grieving, rejoicing; and other paffions: but then it is most evident, that these expressions concerning him are metaphorical and popular, used in condescension to the understanding of the ignorant; it is certain they are fo. from reason, and also because other passages in facred writ expressly deny, that God has any parts of the human body, and any of the weak passions of the human mind. Not that he is alike affected towards good and bad; but his complacency in the former, and his disciplicency at the latter are both perfectly calm and tranquil, being founded in reason, not in passion. The love of virtue and hatred of vice are the most dispassionate in the most judicious and best of men; in children and others in whom reason is weak, passion is strong but in those who are the most considerate and the most rational, passion is the weakest: consequently in God who is perfect reason, there is no passion strictly speaking; therefore his love of virtue and his hatred of vice are the most tranquil, becoming an infinite spirit. Fury is not in him, nor any other human infirmity whatever; if there were any in him, he who forefaw from the beginning, how we in particular wou'd behave, either wou'd not have made us what we are, creatures so fallible and peccable, or wou'd fome way or other have made it impossible for us to have offended, for the fake of his own tranquillity and happiness.

2. We must ascribe all possible perfection to him. For this is an uncontestable notion of God, that he is a Being of all perfection,

because

because as there is no persection in the creature but what is derived from him, it must therefore be in him in its highest exaltation, fince no cause can impart more than it has, Not that every thing accounted a perfection in the creature, may be afcrib'd to God; for instance, comely proportion of parts, bodily, agility, swiftness of motion, graceful elocution and feveral fuch things, which are founded in matter; these cannot belong to him who is immaterial. The perfections and excellencies of all Beings are fuitable to their particular nature, those of mere inanimate Beings are fuch as they are capable of, those of brutes are brutal, those of man human, those of angels angelic, and those of God divine. It wou'd introduce nothing but diforder and confusion in the universe, to depress fuperior perfections and excellencies on one hand, and to transfer and exalt the inferior on the other: this wou'd be spreading irregularity and disproportion indeed: let us not then ascribe to inferior Beings, properties and perfections which are too great for them, nor ascribe to superior Beings excellencies too mean for them, leaft of all let us do this to the supreme Being, for this wou'd be degrading him, as that wou'd be undue elevating others.

3. We must not make the perfections of God to clash with one another. A common fault,

fault, and yet a very bad one, owing to the most partial, defective and imperfect confideration of God. Some have confidered him as mere power and fovereignty, and therefore have thought and spoke hardly of him and of his decrees, as if he were an arbitrary Being, and his decrees all caprice and humour. Others have fancied, that he is all mercy and tenderness, and cannot find in his heart to punish finally vicious creatures hereafter. Others have believed of him, that he is foon provok'd and hard to be reconciled. But these are all mistaken apprehensions of him. Were God mere power and fovereignty, what wou'd become of his wildom, righteoulness and goodness? Were he all mercy and tenderness, where wou'd be his wisdom, justice, and holines? Were he all revenge and severity, where wou'd be all his moral perfections. Confidering him as only an arbitrary fovereign, is the fault of the morose and supercilious; representing him as all tenderness is the error of the vain and prefumptuous; and imagining he is only fevere and revengeful, is the wretched delution of the despairing and gloomy. This partial way of confidering God has been the fource of a multitude of fad mistakes in theology, of great misapprehensions concerning him in many minds, and of much mischief to the interest of virtue and religion: it cannot be otherwise, seeing Bb

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it is at best viewing only one perfection or two in God, and difregarding all the rest; thus he must appear a very deform'd and imperfect Being, for a perfection is so only when in conjunction with others, as wisdom united with righteousness and goodness, but without these wisdom is only crast. Set not one perfection of God at variance with another, fovereignty with goodness, and goodness with wisdom, and justice with goodness, as has been the manner of many, even of whole fects; from whence have arose very strange and wretched misapprehensions concerning God, monstrous tenets in theology, and diabolical feuds amongst different fects, like those Juvenal mentions amongst the Agyptians, that polytheistic nation (1).

4. In order to know God, confider carefully the works of his hands; or, study attentively the great and glorious volume of nature. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament shews his handy work: the invisible things of him from the creation of

(e) Labitur hic quidam nimia formidine cursum Præcipitans, capiturque ast illum in plurima sectum Frusta ac particulas, ut multis mortuus unus Sufficiret, totum corrosis ossibus edit Victrix turba; nec ardenti decoxit aheno Aut verubus; longum usque adeo tardumque putavit Expectare socos contenta cadavere crudo.

And yet all this shocking ferity was for the sake of a wooden image of a serpent or ape.

the world are clearly feen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. To fay that the creation is eternal of itself, is very unphilosophical; if it never had a beginning, we may even with Lucretius himself ask, how it comes to pass, that the antient poets never mention any thing older than the Theban (f) war, or the ruin of Troy? If this were the cafe, it is strange, that the most antient history goes no further backwards, and that learning and the sciences, and every valuable invention was no fooner found out. Other arguments against the eternal duration of this mundan system need not be hinted here, because it has been prov'd in the preceding pages, that it is not felf-existent.

And to fay with Lucretius and his fect. that it once had a beginning, but this was owing to mere chance, is still as abfurd every whit. As reasonable it is to imagine, that the finest poems of our greatest epic poets, or the finest pieces of our most celebrated painters, or the most elegant structures of the most famous architects are all chance-work. This Epicurean hypothesis concerning the origin of things is fo ridiculous, that it may B b 2

(f) - Si nulla fuit genitalis origo Terrarum et cœlf, semperque æterna suere: Cur supra bellum Thebanum, et sunera Trojæ Non alias alii quoque res cecinere poetæ?

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be suppos'd they who embraced it, did not believe it, and were not in good earnest, but made themselves fools, to make others sport, or that they doted. No, as the changeable nature of things proves that they are not of themselves; so the beauty, uniformity, and amazing contrivance every where visible in the creation, argue them to be the effects of a most intelligent, powerful, and good Being. It is he who made matter and spirit; matter in all it's various compositions and forms; and spirit from the lowest infect to the highest angel: it is he who has raised all the productions of matter beyond all the imaginable power of it's unactive nature, in the vegetation and growth of plants; and has with amazing wisdom diversify'd the vital world. His wisdom particularly appears in every part of his creation more infinitely than defign and the skill of any mechanic is manifested in any machine. The fight and motion of the heavenly bodies are not to be better adjusted in even imagination: a bigger or nearer fun wou'd have fcourch'd us with excessive heat, and one lesser or more distant wou'd have starved us with cold; and an inequality in it's motion wou'd bring upon us the same effects. Here is motion as wisely adjusted to it's great ends, as the motion of any clock is, to shew the time of the day. The earth

too is beautifully adorned with plants and animals, divertified with feas and rivers, and furnished with air, winds, clouds, rain, dew, meteors, and minerals for use and ornament. And had the earth, with it's appendages, been disposed of otherways than it is, it had not been habitable; a greater quantity of water wou'd have produced too much moisture, a less wou'd have caused a drought; more violent winds wou'd be ruinous hurricanes, and less, much more none, wou'd bring on an universal stagnation. Even those parts of the material world deem'd by our minute philosophers imperfections, are very useful, as wide feas, huge barren defarts, storms and tempests; for the first are necessary for producing a sufficient quantity of rain and dew, the fecond for promoting the falubrity of the air, and the last for purifying it. In the animal world what an aftonishing variety of living creatures occurs every where, in the water, air, and on the furface of our globe! All which, from the minutest infect or worm to the whale, manifest astonishing contrivance, all the finny and feather'd tribes adapted to their respective regions, the former for swimming, and the latter for flying, and the inhabitants of the earth fitted for their particular ends. Such creatures cannot possibly be the effects of neceffity or the sports of chance, there is too B b 3 much

much usefulness and variety in them to be the effects of either. But then if you advance higher, to the study of yourselves, of your bodies and fouls, of the former with all it's parts, and of the latter with all it's faculties and capacities; and if you can believe you are the creatures of chance or destiny, you may as reasonably believe any thing, all the metamorphofes of the poets, all the tales of the Rabbins, all the legends of the Papifts. and the visions of Mahomet. Alas, it is a common fault, that this study of nature is much neglected, and the works of God more overlook'd than the bungling performances of art. Nature's volume lyes open before us, in most glorious legible characters, to be read and studied by us all; and yet there is but here one and there another, perhaps in a whole kingdom, that ever looks into it to any purpose; to the rest it is as a book sealed, or in an unknown and unintelligible tongue. Is there proper regard paid to the great author of nature, where it is flighted at this rate?

5. In order to know God, it will be useful to be well acquainted with divine Revelation. This is an inestimable favour vouchsafed to us, as it contains the best theology and the best morality any where extant, delivered in a way the easiest to be understood, and therefore the most suitable to the bulk of mankind.

The

The most have not both leifure and capacity for a long and labour'd demonstration of either; but any capacity is fit for understanding the plain things faid in Revelation, concerning God particularly; he that runs may read what he is to know and believe concerning the most perfect Being; there he will find every imperfection remov'd far from God, and all perfection afcrib'd to him. Indeed fometimes, as we have observed before, you will read of his having eyes, hands, and feet, also of his being griev'd, repenting, taking vengeance, vengeance belonging to him folely, and fuch other expressions: but then it is evident, they are metaphorical expreffions, because it teaches us expressly, that he has not eyes of flesh, nor does he see as man feeth, confequently that he has not an arm of flesh, nor feet, &c. And it instructs us, that he is not man that he shou'd lie, nor the fon of man, that he should repent, that he does not fee, hear, and act as we do; nor grieve, repent, is furious and revengeful as men are; but that he is the most perfect spirit, and therefore hears, sees, and acts; that he grieves, repents, in a manner suitable to the most perfectly spiritual Being. There is therefore no danger of misunderstanding these lax, and metaphorical expressions concerning God, frequent in Revelation, if people will but read with attention: but if they B b 4

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will not, there is no preventing their becoming such as the antient sect of Anthropomorphites were, who interpreted in a strict and literal sense the scriptural metaphorical ex-

pressions concerning God.

It must be own'd too, that amongst those who embrace this Revelation, there is a great variety of opinions concerning God, and many very strange and horrid; and yet all of them. it is pretended, are derived from it. Hence the consequence is, either that Revelation is inconfistent, or that the different fects of christians do not all of them understand it right: but the former cannot be true, therefore the latter must. And certain it is, that scripture does not represent it's most perfect author in fo many different lights, as a most arbitrary Being, according to some systems, or as a most weak, nay, most immoral Being, according to others; but from beginning to end is confistent in what it reveals concerning God, always representing him to us as a Being of all possible perfection, without the least variableness or even shadow of turning. The reason therefore of the different fentiments amongst christians concerning him, is not because Revelation contradicts itself, but because they do not, many of them, use it as the rule of their faith (g), but as the support

<sup>(</sup>g) Many use scripture as Procrusses did his guests, fitting them of what size soever to his bed, by amputation or extension.

of their preconceived notions and their respective systems of theology: amongst a great number of instances and proofs hereof transubstantiation is one, it is a darling preconceived notion, and therefore the believer of it endeavours to shew that Revelation is for it, as contrary as it is both to reason and Revelation.

Therefore, in using Revelation we must be learners, not teachers, scholars, not masters; and we should follow the plain general drift of it, not taking up any opinion upon the foundation of a few obscure passages, fince that opinion is of no moment which has but one or two texts to countenance it; and that must be dubious, which is founded only upon obscure texts, and that opinion doubtless is false, which is contrary to a multitude of plain texts. That you may then gain a true fcriptural knowledge of God, confult chiefly the plain obvious parts of Revelation; in the book of Job and Isaiab particularly, you'll meet with the fublimest sentiments and expressions concerning God, not to be parallell'd in any heathen author, whether poet or philosopher. Above all, read and study Isaiah's 40th chap. Had Longinus who admir'd Moses's sublimity of fentiment and diction concerning the Creator as inimitable, met with this most lofty description of God, or had consider'd it, how wou'd he have been transported with it! Here

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is power, wisdom, greatness, and majesty which no finite mind can comprehend, much less can created tongue fully describe: power irrefistable, wisdom infallible, and majesty unparallell'd; an arm which can do every thing without the least difficulty, a mind which knows every thing without the least mistake and the least trouble, and a Being which no duration or space can limit; in comparison with whose excellency all finite perfection, taken collectively, is not fo much as an atom is to a mountain, nor as a drop is to a whole ocean. In the New Testament you'll meet with the most amiable descriptions of God, particularly this charming one, that God is love.

6. In fine, the best way to know God is to be virtuous. A good man knows him, not by reason only, but especially by perception and fenfation, and consequently knows him the best, as experimental knowledge is the most impressive, and the most durable: whereas a vicious creature knows him by mere speculation only, a much inferior manner of knowing any thing. Befides, virtue naturally disposes for a right knowledge of God; and he who refembles him the most will know him best: on the contrary, vice weakens reason, darkens the understanding, and renders it unfit for divine contemplations. A virtuous mind also earnestly defires and endeavours

endeavours to know God, but an unrighteous creature is averfe to this most excellent and most necessary science, and consequently shuns it: and certain it is, he is more likely to know any thing, who longs and strives to know it, than he who does neither, nay, who doth the very contrary. Once more, it is plain, we are apt to form our ideas of God by what we know of ourselves; then a good man is in the furest way for knowing him, as he is, according to his measure, a living image of his maker. As this then is much the best way for gaining a right knowledge of God, to be good and do good, let us take it above Indeed many may cry up their all others. own party as the foundest believers and the most excellent part of God's church, and may represent their own peculiar systems as the best theological compends, and studying their darling religious schemes as the most fuccessful method for attaining just and worthy sentiments of God: but after all, it is an undoubted truth, that the best way to believe aright concerning him and every branch of religious doctrine is to love him and it fupremely; this is to be preferr'd not only to any party attachment, but to studying the best books, to hearing the best sermons, and let me add, to faying the best prayers, whether extempore or compos'd by either private or public makers of forms of devotion. THE

# The CONCLUSION.

OW we are for the present going to leave this greatest and most delightful subject of meditation, the being and perfections of God, who is perfect reason, rectitude and goodness: the knowledge therefore of him must be our highest wisdom, resembling him our highest perfection, and the enjoyment of him our confummate felicity. Upon a comparison, how mean and triffing do all other subjects of speculation appear, infinitely more inferior to this, than the light of a glow-worm is to that of the fun! Let it therefore be our greatest defire to know him, and our firm resolution to pursue this divine knowledge day after day. The importance, the necessity, and the pleasure of this knowledge, are sufficient to excite us to the most vigorous pursuits of it. This knowledge wilk certainly open, dilate, and expand the mind more

more than any other. But then we must not stop here, as this is but the soundation; and a soundation without a superstructure is of no use, tho' ever so well laid: let us then raise from this all proper divine tempers, and a vital divine resemblance of this most glorious object, together with an habitual adoration of him, as well in constant acts of mental worship, as in outward forms. By this means we shall not only believe, but enjoy the Deity, and almost lose faith in divine sensation.





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